

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Monday 30 June 2008****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chair:**

Ms M.G. Thompson

Members:

Ms V.A. Chapman

Ms C.C. Fox

Hon. R.G. Kerin

Dr D. McFetridge

Mr T. Piccolo

Hon. L. Stevens

*The committee met at 11:00***DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET, \$149,901,000****ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET,
\$18,780,000****Witness:**

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill, Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms J. Mazel, Executive Director, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms N. Saunders, Director, Aboriginal Culture and Heritage, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms L. Forrest, Director, Community Development, Policy and Strategic Intervention Projects, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr R. Starkie, Manager, Strategic Services, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr J. Loulas, Principal Financial Controller, Corporate Affairs, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The CHAIR: The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The committee will determine an approximate time for consideration of proposed payments to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers. Has the timetable been agreed?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, madam.

The CHAIR: If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 18 July. I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions based on about three questions per member, alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. A member who is not part of the committee may, at the discretion of the chair, ask a question. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*.

There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the committee. The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house—that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I also advise that for the purposes of the committee, television coverage will be allowed for filming from both the northern and southern galleries.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Budget Statement, in particular, pages 2.7 to 2.9 and Appendix C, and Portfolio Statement, Volume 1, part 1. Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do. Last year was a momentous time in Aboriginal affairs in South Australia, and indeed nationally. It commenced with a renewed focus on Aboriginal people due to a number of significant anniversaries in 2007: the 40th year since the 1967 referendum, the 50th year since NAIDOC Week, and the 10th anniversary of the *Bringing Them Home* report. In addition to this, the previous federal government's push on abuse in remote communities created a renewed focus for South Australia and provided welcome opportunities to tackle an issue which we have been working on for a number of years.

Last year also saw the first full year with a number of Aboriginal-specific South Australian Strategic Plan targets expanded from two to nine, including a target in each of the key areas of the plan. In the middle of the financial year, a new federal government was elected that embarked on a radical reform plan through COAG that is still a work in progress but proposes to reshape the nature of federal/state relations in relation to Aboriginal affairs. The new commonwealth government heralded in a new era of relationships with the Aboriginal community with one of its first acts—that is, a national apology to the Stolen Generations. Here in South Australia, we had a legal first with compensation being paid to the Ngarrindjeri man removed from his parents as a child.

The South Australian government has also heralded a new era in relations with the South Australian Aboriginal community by the creation of an Australian first consultative structure to ensure that Aboriginal views are heard in the highest levels of government. We created the position of the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement to advocate for the needs of Aboriginal people to government and the community. We also appointed a permanent Aboriginal advisory council to ensure that Aboriginal views were heard at the highest levels of government. The South Australian government has advocated strongly for engagement with Aboriginal people and a focus on positive outcomes in all policy areas.

That has included strong representations to the federal government on changes to CDEP, municipal services funding, land tenure, the permit system and Aboriginal housing. We successfully renegotiated land tenure demands as they related to vital housing funding. We are pleased that changes earmarked by the Howard government in relation to CDEP are now being reviewed.

We have also continued to fight for a logical transition from the community housing and assistance program, which includes municipal services funding, to the Australian Remote Indigenous Accommodation (ARIA) program. This will be an important further work between us and the incoming federal government. These major policy debates have moved into the COAG sphere, and the South Australian government continues to work hard for positive reforms in that area—in particular, Aboriginal early childhood development, which is a critical part of this whole equation.

We have had the commissioning of the 'To Break the Cycle' report from Monsignor Cappelletti, which has received substantial funding in this budget to the order of \$11 million. Similarly, Commissioner Mullighan's inquiry into child sexual abuse on the APY lands (the report on which was handed down in May) has been met with immediate government action, and more will follow. As a stated earlier, the renewed focus of the federal government on community safety has been welcomed by this government. We were the first state to agree to attend the national summit and we took a range of proposals to that summit, including one for the expansion of the Mullighan inquiry. The reason we were so quick to embrace the new focus was because we had already begun the process ourselves.

When this government came to power Aboriginal communities in general—and in the APY lands, in particular—had suffered neglect by previous governments, of all persuasions; when this government came to power there was not one child protection worker in the APY lands; when this government came to power there was not one police officer stationed on the lands; when this government came to power the TAFE system had been dismantled and there were few youth

programs and little basic infrastructure. It was this government that put police onto the lands and child protection workers back on the lands, and that rebuilt basic infrastructure such as power and water. All of this before the Northern Territory intervention and before the Mullighan inquiry report. The most recent Nganampa Health independent study of petrol sniffing indicated a 46 per cent drop in petrol sniffing. This was on top of the 60 per cent drop of the previous survey and a 20 per cent drop the survey before.

There is much more to be done; we know that we cannot undo decades of neglect quickly, but the commitment is to maintain our focus and keep working. In this regard I think it is appropriate to recognise the opposition parties. While we do have our disagreements, our fundamental position in relation to Aboriginal affairs remains a constructive one. There is no glory in Aboriginal affairs, there are no quick solutions, and the complexity of Aboriginal affairs provides fertile ground for political posturing. However, what we do not need is more posturing: what we need is action, and the bipartisanship of the opposition parties is a critical part of that whole exercise.

With regard to the Mullighan report, the parliament has given the government three months to provide our initial response. However, some of the matters raised were too pressing to wait and this is why we acted very quickly on securing community safety as the first, and essential, step in dealing with the problems. On the day we tabled the report—within a week of receiving it ourselves—we announced immediate acceptance of a number of the commission's recommendations that addressed community safety. I would like to recognise the support we are receiving from the federal government in this area; its initial contribution of \$15 million for a third police station and associated police housing is invaluable.

For its part, the South Australian government announced it would post an extra eight police officers to the region, which takes the total number of permanent officers to 19. We also announced we would place an additional five child protection workers on the lands, bringing the total to eight. These are significant and important first response measures. A full response to all 46 recommendations—which cover areas such as governance, child protection, health and mental health, education, and justice—will be announced well within the timeframe given to us by parliament. In these difficult areas, as in broad matters relating to policy and service delivery, the South Australian government continues to work collaboratively with Aboriginal people. That is why we established a permanent South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council and created the position of Commissioner of Aboriginal Engagement.

However, as much as we have done there is much more to do. We will provide our remaining responses to the Mullighan report soon; we have secured in-principle agreement to leasing of the \$25 million housing package in the APY lands, and this year we will secure the leases and start the building program. We have built the substance misuse facility on the APY lands, and the outreach program has been operating for some time. The COAG reform process is to be finished this year.

You will note that the budget provides an additional \$300,000 for each of the next two financial years to support the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act—ensuring protection of Aboriginal heritage is another priority area for the state government—and the review will commence in the coming months. Preparatory work on the review of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act has already begun and a full consultation process will also commence this year.

The CHAIR: Does the member for Morphett wish to make a statement?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the minister said, there are many good things happening in Aboriginal communities across the state, and there are many positive outcomes. I would like to thank the minister for his openness and willingness to meet with me and discuss the issues, and we have always tried to do that in a bipartisan way. As the minister said, we do have our differences but that has never stopped us going forward and ensuring that the outcomes are positive ones for Aboriginal communities right across the state—not just the APY lands (which seem to get a lot of focus), but also those in the Riverland, across the West Coast, and down south. In many cases there are also similar issues with urban Aboriginal families. There are also many similarities with problems, such as housing shortages and poor homemaker skills. The training being rolled out across the state by the government is working but there is still a long way to go.

One of the big problems I have, as an individual and as shadow minister, as well as a member of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee, is that we have visited a number of communities where governance training needs to be improved. Along with that there have been general problems within the communities such as housing shortages and financial

mismanagement by individuals, and those are some areas on which we need to focus so that they do not become overwhelming problems for both the communities and for individuals. I am looking forward to participating in the review of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act, both as shadow minister and as a member of the parliamentary standing committee. Moving forward on the housing on APY lands is something I am very pleased to see happening; it has taken a while but we are getting there.

Obviously, the Mullighan report has received a lot of media coverage in terms of Aboriginal affairs and it has highlighted some very serious issues, including 141 cases of sexual abuse. However, when that is looked at as a percentage it in fact seems to be slightly lower than that of the general population. That is not to say it is something that can be tolerated in any shape or form, but Aboriginal people being held out as being of particular interest to police needs to be put in context. It is a community-wide issue that needs to be focused on.

Both Mullighan reports have done a very good job in highlighting that, but the people in the APY Lands are conscious of their issues and are certainly more than happy to progress all 46 of the Mullighan recommendations. We look forward to the government's response by 30 July 2008. I will finish by thanking the minister for his bipartisan support. We do have our differences, but we can move forward and I look forward to getting on with questions.

My first question relates to Budget Paper 4, page 1.47: the response to the Mullighan Commission. The state government made an immediate response to five of the recommendations: school-based social workers, restricting access to pornography, child protection workers, fully operational police stations, and community-based sworn police officers. The issue I have is with the police stations and police officers. Minister, when will those police stations be built, will they be built as Commissioner Mullighan intended, in the communities?

I realise the logistical problems with having police officers in each community because it is a 24/7, 365 days a year job for those police officers. They need to be given some special consideration, but as Commissioner Mullighan has said, they need to be in the communities. Unfortunately, the Premier in tabling the report did not distinguish between having policing on the lands compared with having policing in the APY communities.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The question of when is affected by the Mullighan report. We negotiated a package of measures with the previous federal government, which involved the building of two police stations. Those police stations were to be based in Amata and Pukatja and that process has commenced, it commenced before the handing down of the Mullighan inquiry report. That process and the time lines set by the previous Howard federal government were on track.

The Mullighan report suggested a further police station. We accepted that recommendation. That police station has been identified to be placed at Mimili and, once again, each of those police stations (at Amata, Pukatja and Mimili) will be located within the community. I think it was an important part of the recommendation that they were, indeed, placed in the community.

There is a possibility that the addition of the further police station could press the time lines out for all of the police stations a little, although my present advice is that it is still within the time lines that were set for the original two police stations. That has been quite good work done by the agency to try to keep within those times. I am always a little hesitant, though, to be very firm about time lines about building anything in remote communities because of the complexities involved, but at the moment they appear to be within the original specified time lines.

Consistent with your observations, they will be built within the communities, notwithstanding the difficulties that that can sometimes create. We acknowledge that while that can be difficult for the police officers, provided the appropriate safeguards and security are provided, which has been built into the process, it is a much more effective way of policing than having to drive a considerable distance when, often, the circumstances have altered considerably. That has been a key demand of community members, to have the police stations in the communities and we are very pleased to be able to deliver that.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to the same reference: how much funding has the state government allocated in 2008-09 to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara, the Maralinga Tjarutja and the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act to enable those three bodies to fulfil their statutory responsibilities? Has the APY budget been approved now or not? If you could also tell us how the funding in 2008-09 compares with 2007-08, that would be useful, too.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, I have the answer to that question. This is the administration grants for the purposes of administering the land rights legislation in respect to that. It is not the total of the funding we give to each of those bodies; it is solely for the purpose of administering land rights legislation. The grants to the various bodies in 2008-09 are: APY, \$1,100,004; Maralinga Tjarutja, \$468,054; and Aboriginal Lands Trust, \$521,110. Those grants have increased from 2007-08 to those 2008-09 figures in accordance with CPI increases.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Has the budget for the APY, which is for the overall running of the APY, been approved now or not?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The APY say that they submitted a budget. In fact, a document that was entitled as a draft budget was handed to a finance officer. It is not clear that it has been through the APY executive, which is a requirement. We wrote to the APY executive saying, 'Look, we're happy to treat that document as the budget. We don't want to be awkward, but you just need to satisfy us that it has been approved by the APY executive.' We are yet to receive a response about that. We have also offered to give them interim funding to tide them over until they can achieve that. The budget is in order. There is no issue with the budget.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to the same reference, minister. How much funding has the state government allocated in 2008-09 for governance training in the APY lands, the Maralinga Tjarutja lands and the Aboriginal Lands Trust communities and to the Aboriginal Lands Trust Board? Once again, how does that compare with 2007-08?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think that this is a very important question. Governance is a critical issue we have identified as lying at the heart of many of the difficulties we are finding in remote communities. A basic question is the level of capacity of those people who hold positions within various Aboriginal organisations to discharge the functions effectively.

In October 2007, AARD, together with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, started a pilot program for corporate governance training, and 17 participants completed the first three-day workshop, including the chair of a community council. The second workshop was held in December 2007, when 28 participants completed the course. Again, there was an excellent representation of young people, with four of the participants aged under 25. The third workshop was held in Port Augusta in April 2008, and 26 participants completed the course, three of whom were under the age of 25.

The course has been extremely well received, which is demonstrated by the participants' high level of interest in enrolling in a Certificate IV in Business (Governance), with funding provided from ORATSIC. The first Certificate IV in Business (Governance) commenced 2 June 2008, when 17 students enrolled.

In relation to the funding we have provided, participants for each workshop are brought from regional, remote and urban areas to a central location. Participants' travel, accommodation and meals are fully covered. Each of the three-day workshops costs around \$30,000, with ORATSIC estimating the cost of the Certificate IV at around \$200,000. ORATSIC is covering the full cost of the program that began in June 2008.

Ongoing funding for the program is still being negotiated with the commonwealth. We are making contributions, as is the commonwealth. The plan is to deliver training over a period of 12 to 18 months to ensure that more of the people who participate in these community councils receive the appropriate training.

In addition to developing the program of governance training, AARD is looking at ways in which it can best support Aboriginal organisations once they have completed the training. This will complement the work currently being done by AARD's community development team. To bring the work of the community development team and the governance training project together, AARD is piloting a community planning process with the Raukkan council.

The community development plan will include a snapshot of the council and the region it is within, a list of priorities for council and community and an analysis of the skills and training needs of the council. This has been a big push, and it will continue to be an important part of our activities.

Membership:

Ms Breuer substituted for Mr Piccolo.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.47, Program 14: Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. Can the minister outline what strategies the government has in place to protect and preserve Aboriginal heritage which ensure active involvement from local Aboriginal heritage groups and which build their capacities to record, monitor and protect local heritage sites?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: One of the big challenges facing the protection of Aboriginal heritage items is the absence of information about these sites. This situation impedes negotiations about land use and development and threatens the protection of Aboriginal heritage.

We have invested heavily in Aboriginal heritage management with some impressive results. The recording of sites has increased sixfold in the past three years, from an average of 75 per annum from 2002 to 2005 to an average of 350 per annum since 2006. However, many more sites still need to be recorded.

In January 2007, I endorsed a new approach to record the existence of Aboriginal sites. The foundations are being laid for a rapid increase in site recordings in a transparent and quality controlled manner that will be both acceptable to industry and carried out by Aboriginal people, who would be trained and supported in partnership with government.

These include agreements being negotiated with Aboriginal groups to develop partnerships in managing heritage information. A state level working relationship agreement was reached between the state Aboriginal Heritage Committee and the Congress of Native Title Bodies in 2007, and this is the model for local level agreements.

Aboriginal people are being trained to record and conserve Aboriginal sites. This training builds their capacities to record, monitor and protect local heritage sites. Eight site recording and conservation field schools have been conducted across the state in conjunction with Flinders University. Discussions are continuing with industry as part of the indigenous land use agreement negotiations to solicit further support. This has been a very important part of the new approach, that is, to try to bring together the native title process and the heritage process which, to this point, have been separate processes.

Pilot projects in partnership with Aboriginal traditional owners about recording and verifying sites are being conducted. This partnership arrangement will ensure the reliability and validity of existing and new recordings so that all stakeholders can participate with competence and certainty. Agreements about access to and sharing Aboriginal heritage information are being negotiated with heritage groups to streamline procedures.

To support Aboriginal cultural development, and to have sites recorded in a cost-effective way, investigations are continuing about the way best to support Aboriginal people to record, protect and preserve sites. We think that this will provide a much better way of recording sites and encouraging agreements, and it will lead to much better relationships between the Aboriginal community and those who seek to develop land.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.47, Program 14: Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, which relates to the implementation of plans to achieve target T6.24: Aboriginal employees. The South Australian Strategic Plan, target T6.24, Aboriginal employees, seeks to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed within the state public sector. Can the minister provide more information on what is being done to address this target?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division is responsible for the coordination of across-government activity about the number of Aboriginal employees spread across all agencies and classification levels within the public sector. That is a new target. The employment target is 2 per cent by 2010 to maintain or better those levels to 2014. This expands the existing target, which was less specific, to about 2 per cent. Therefore, it now speaks to all the positions and classifications, including leadership roles, which is an important matter, rather than just having a group of Aboriginal people concentrated in some of the lower classifications.

Aboriginal employment in the public sector has increased from 784 employees—0.9 per cent of the state public sector workforce in 2003—to 1,391 Aboriginal employees, or 1.5 per cent, as of June 2007. That is an increase of 600 new Aboriginal people with jobs in the state public sector. That, of course, has its own specific benefit for those people, but it also changes our state public sector in a fundamental way, just as does diversity in any organisation.

A range of initiatives have been developed to assist the public sector to reach the target successfully. These include: supporting agencies to develop their own internal Aboriginal employment strategies based on workforce development, recruitment, retention, support

mechanisms and career development; targeted marketing of the public sector across the state throughout Aboriginal communities, secondary schools, tertiary and training organisations, with the aim of attracting job-ready Aboriginal people into the public sector; improved promotion and access to graduate programs, traineeships and scholarships across government, including school-based apprenticeships for young Aboriginal people; and the development of a single induction program for all new Aboriginal employees which takes into consideration a particular set of needs in terms of their cultural and family obligations as employees.

It is also important to have an enhanced culturally inclusive public sector environment to strengthen the retention of people, and our cultural inclusion framework, which will assist agencies to deliver culturally inclusive programs, will help in that regard. In strengthening the retention of Aboriginal employees through formalised career paths, it is critical that people can see a future for themselves. This year we will continue to develop and promote strategies to train, recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal people within the public sector. Agencies are currently in the process of self-assessing against the cultural inclusion framework and will be required to report their findings at the end of this year, at which time a whole of government report will be prepared.

An Aboriginal leadership program has been developed, targeting Aboriginal public sector employees in the mid senior level and above, with the aim of having 50 participants undertaking a program within 12 to 24 months. Training for participants will focus on a number of areas and will be sorted through mentoring, work sharing and secondment opportunities. Linked to the Aboriginal leadership in the South Australian Strategic Plan target, an Aboriginal leadership register is currently being developed, which will assist in increasing the number of Aboriginal employees in leadership positions across the public sector. Agencies will be able to consult the register in seeking to fill vacant board and committee positions as they arise.

An HR directors/senior managers group is being developed, which will allow an opportunity for executive and senior HR practitioners from each department to come together to start to discuss the question of Aboriginal employment. AARD has established a strong partnership with the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology to assist with the development of the number of initiatives under this target.

Ms FOX: I again refer to Budget Paper, Volume 1, page 1.47, Program 14: Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. My question is in relation to South Australia's Aboriginal Advisory Council. Can the minister provide information on the recent establishment of South Australia's Aboriginal Advisory Council as well as the initiative to appoint a Commissioner of Aboriginal Engagement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Solutions to many of the problems that face the Aboriginal community need strong Aboriginal leadership if they are to be sustainable. I think that it is true to say that the big answers for Aboriginal people will come from Aboriginal people themselves. There are things that we can do to help or hinder but, ultimately, that will be the solution. The government has prioritised Aboriginal leadership as one of the foundation stones for sustaining a long-term approach to Aboriginal disadvantage.

In November 2005, the state government established an interim Aboriginal Advisory Council to recommend a suitable structure for us to engage with Aboriginal people in the context of the abolition of ATSIC. In May 2007, the council completed a report recommending an engagement mechanism between South Australian Aboriginal people, the state government and the broader community. In essence, it saw the question in three types of engagement.

First, there is the democratic representative body, for which there is still an ambition, which we believe should not be replicated on a state level; it should happen at a national level if it is to happen. That matter was essentially left for the Labor government, which has a commitment to move for such a body. The second is a high-level advisory body, which provides a confidential sounding board for government for the decisions about which the government needs or wants input, but does not necessarily want to read it in the front page of the paper the next day—that is, the Aboriginal Advisory Council.

The third idea is an advocacy body to whom Aboriginal people can come within government to express a point of view which might be critical of the government, and which that person may be able to take up either internally or, if they believe appropriate, to make public representations about it. They were the three roles, and they found their expression in the state government's response to that report.

The new Aboriginal Advisory Council was established in April 2008, and is chaired by Ms Kerry Colbung. Its first meeting was held in May. The role of the council is to provide the

government with advice on existing programs and policies as they affect Aboriginal people; to identify and inform government of emerging issues that affect Aboriginal people across the state; to provide the government with advice on the development and implementation of future policies; to provide advice to government agencies about appropriate consultation processes with Aboriginal communities; and to maintain links with other relevant bodies.

Six of the previous interim advisory councils were reappointed to the new council with an additional four appointed by me after advice from the department. The Aboriginal Advisory Council is currently addressing issues such as South Australia's Strategic Plan, emerging future issues, advice to government, and their work plan and directions for this year and beyond. The advisory council meets at least quarterly, and more regularly if required.

The second institution, the appointment of the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, Mr Klynton Wanganeen, was made in February 2008 by His Excellency the Governor and was the other major initiative. While the advisory council provides high level confidential advice, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement was to provide a more public advocacy role, for the interests of the South Australian Aboriginal community to government, the private sector and the broad community.

The commissioner has met with a number of key stakeholders, including: Mr Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner; Ms Leena Sudano, the Health and Community Services Complaint Commissioner; the Aboriginal Lands Trust; and the Government's Senior Management Council. He has already made speeches at the forum such as the statewide Substance Abuse Conference, with the Australian Drug and Alcohol Council, Grannies Group, and the Aboriginal Education Unit Conference, and has appeared in *The Advertiser* promoting issues of importance to Aboriginal people. The commissioner meets with me bi-monthly to ensure that I am kept up to date with emerging issues, and has indicated to me that Aboriginal employment will be one of his key topics of focus.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.47—'monitoring and reporting on initiatives to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in South Australia'. Minister, I do not know whether the families that have been in the paper just recently were of Aboriginal descent, but last year we talked about Homemaker programs versus facilities for domestic violence, and I have seen your explanations and the progress that has been made in relation to the domestic violence areas, particularly over on the West Coast.

But the Homemaker programs have really come to the fore now, both over on the West Coast, where I think they seem to have fallen by the wayside, and more in the metropolitan area. Are these Homemaker programs being made available to Aboriginal families in the metropolitan area? I do not know whether these families were of Aboriginal descent or not, but it seems that, if they are not, they need Homemaker programs, from what I am hearing. But if we do have Aboriginal families, in particular, that are living in overcrowded houses in the metropolitan area, do we know how many families are in that position, and are those families receiving assistance to help cope with the running of the home?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: They are matters specific to the families and communities portfolio, and I do not have the advisers with me about that matter. I am happy to address those matters if your colleagues want to raise them within that particular area. But can I say that, in general—and it is really a matter for the Minister for Health—we have in the metropolitan area a universal home visiting program, so every child that is born in South Australia is offered this, and there is an extraordinarily high take-up rate of visits to those families where there is a newborn child. Each of those families gets a nurse coming to them.

For those families where there is deemed to be some difficulty, and there could be a range of reasons why there are difficulties within those families, there is what is called a sustained home visiting program, where there can be follow-up for an extended period of time to assist the family with precisely the matters that are the subject of the Homemaker programs in some remote communities. So this involves questions of hygiene and parenting, all of the things that really are necessary to ensure that children are safe and properly developed. So that has been very important.

Indeed, the member for Little Para was the minister who introduced that scheme, and it is, I think, probably one of the finest public policy initiatives that we have made in government, and it does not distinguish between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal South Australians. It is there irrespective of ethnicity. So, that is what occurs within the metropolitan area. And, of course, it has its resonance in remote communities, with our Homemaker programs, which have been rolled out

extensively in remote areas. Indeed, we have recently increased the number of Homemaker programs in relation to the APY lands and other remote communities. So, that will be a continuing focus for us.

Mr HANNA: I refer to the same page, 1.47, where there is a reference to supporting the Aboriginal Advisory Council and the state's three statutory landholding authorities. My question is: what is the increase in state government funding, in real terms, to the following bodies: the Anangu Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara, the Maralinga Tjarutja and the Aboriginal Lands Trust?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, whoever is supplying the questions has already managed to supply that to the member for Morphet. That was asked and answered earlier.

Dr McFETRIDGE: There are a lot of issues that we all share in common—it is tripartisan, perhaps, not bipartisan. Minister, under the same budget paper and the same reference, in relation to the welfare of Aboriginal communities and maintaining facilities there, the MUNS funding is obviously a federal issue, but, with the MUNS funding, can you give us an indication of what is the state of play with the negotiations between the federal government and the state government to provide communities with MUNS funding?

I understand that the Umuwa community at Coober Pedy has received some continuing MUNS funding, but I have read recent media reports of the Davenport Aboriginal community complaining that they feel they are being left—as Malcolm McKenzie is quoted in the media here as saying, 'We have had money ripped away. Things will fall down by the wayside.' It seems a pretty ordinary outcome for them.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a very important question, and, as you would be aware, there was a very strong bipartisan position against the previous Howard government to get them to reconsider the municipal services funding. Can I say that the incoming federal government has shifted its position somewhat. They have provided some funding to Davenport and to the Umoona communities, but it is not at the same level as was being provided before. So there remains an area of disagreement between us. We are continuing to have those discussions. But they have certainly received substantial funding now that had previously been withheld, although it is not as much as it was previously. I will be meeting with Ms Macklin soon to discuss those issues with her.

The basic point is that the commonwealth has been attempting to transfer responsibility for the administration of the MUNS program to the states since November 2006. There was previously an intention to mainstream MUNS services to those communities encapsulated in local government areas. I think we all share the same concern about significant cost-shifting to local government that, if local government is not prepared to accept that, it will press it back onto us. As you have noted, the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee penned a powerful report that went back to the previous government.

We want the federal government to articulate a coherent policy framework for these changes. The new federal government is currently establishing a framework. I think all the communities say that they are prepared to work with the federal government on change, but they want the change to be managed and consultative; they do not want it just to be imposed. There is an interim funding arrangement in place until we can resolve some of these issues. It has improved somewhat, they have some funding, although not as much as they were getting before, and there are commitments to discuss what will happen in the future. So, it still remains an unresolved question.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Regarding the same reference, the Maralinga Tjarutja are keen to get section 400 handed back. Can you provide some information on that?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is an important issue. Section 400 covers an area of about 3,000 square kilometres. Nuclear weapons testing in that area occurred between 1953 and 1963. It was granted to the Australian government in 1967. Nuclear weapons testing resulted in two types of radioactive contamination: surface soils and material that was buried in pits. The British conducted several clean-ups, the last being Operation Brumby in 1967. These were found to be ineffective, and the Australian government conducted a major clean-up between 1995 and 2000. This lowered the amount of radioactive material to safe levels.

The Maralinga Consultative Group was established in 2000 to coordinate the handback of the land to Maralinga Tjarutja. The Australian government has agreed to provide unqualified indemnity to claims relating to radiological and other contamination of section 400. The Australian government can seek recompense for contributory negligence claims not related to contamination.

The process for doing this and how the proportion of contributory negligence will be assessed is still being worked out through the Australian government.

So, it is that tiny technical legal point that remains between us at the moment, but I have met with the previous federal minister and the incoming minister and there seems to be a commitment to move on that to get that sorted out. Agreement has been reached on sharing mediation and arbitration costs for the Maralinga land and the environment management committee. Discussions are occurring about funding the ongoing radiological monitoring of section 400.

Handback negotiations are being finalised. A draft handback deed is being developed, the majority of which has been agreed by everyone: state, federal, local and Maralinga Tjarutja. It has been agreed that there will be no mining on the section 400 site for five years after the handback, and following the handback Maralinga Tjarutja intends to develop a land management and heritage resource centre at Maralinga Village which will be funded by the Australian government. So we are on the verge of being able to conclude that arrangement. I think this will be very beneficial for the Maralinga Tjarutja community when it is finalised.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 1.47, 2008-09 target: providing leadership and negotiating and consulting on a proposed new major housing program on the APY lands. Will the minister provide an update on the negotiation process with the commonwealth government, the APY executive and the Aboriginal communities concerned to deliver this significant housing program on the APY lands?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a critical question. I think everybody acknowledges the dangers of overcrowding for any community but, in particular, for the remote Aboriginal communities on the APY lands. The commonwealth government has offered to the state \$25 million for public housing on the APY lands. The acceptance of this funding is reliant on certain conditions being met, such as the provision of 50-year leases to the state by the APY executive and state management of the housing (in accordance with the usual principles of public housing) along with training and employment of Anangu in construction, repair and maintenance and housing management. It is worth pointing out that those conditions were previously agreed by the APY executive; indeed, they were my instructions when I was negotiating with the previous federal government.

In conjunction with the commonwealth, extensive consultation with the APY executive and Aboriginal communities is continuing to gain agreement on the conditions applying to the proposed housing program. The executive director, AARD and the director of community development met with the Amata and Pukatja communities on 18 June. Those consultations were very successful, with the Amata community identifying appropriate sites for the building of new houses. The Pukatja community agreed in principle to the package.

In these meetings the Amata community agreed to 11 specific sites for the location of houses based on a community structure plan that was previously approved by the Amata Community Council and the APY executive. A meeting with the APY executive also took place and there was a breakthrough agreement to revise the MOU to include 50-year leases. So, the sticking point that had been in place was overcome at that very important discussion. Following the successful discussions, on Monday 23 June,

I wrote to the APY executive board requesting 50-year leases over the identified housing blocks at Amata. I also requested the applications be considered and discussed at the next meeting on 2 July and that I be informed of its decision by Friday 10 July 2008.

It is worth pointing out the significance of these two communities. Pukatja is the largest community; Amata is one of the largest communities and now amounts to a substantial acceptance of the proposition. We also have had two further communities who have approached us—Mimili and Kalka—asking us to come to their communities and explain the package to them.

Should the executive board fail to call a meeting for consideration of the leases within a reasonable time and/or an inquorate meeting is held (because it has been suggested that some members may boycott the meeting), in the first instance, I could write to the executive asking why a meeting has not been held or why the meeting was inquorate.

The purpose of such a letter would be to assist in determining whether a direction is warranted pursuant to section 13N(1) of the act, that an inquorate meeting of the executive be held by a specified time, and that a lease application is to be determined at that meeting. In allowing a reasonable time, this could be concluded in a period after that.

If the executive board fails to comply with a ministerial direction under section 13N(1), the minister has the power under section 13O of the act to suspend the executive board and appoint an administrator who could determine the lease applications in place. Obviously, we do not want it to come to that. We think that there seems to be a much different set of attitudes, and that has been a welcome change; indeed, Ms Mazel has been granted a permit and that had previously been a source of contention. It looks as though some of the issues that were of concern have been resolved.

During this time, the South Australian government will convene intragovernment and intergovernment discussions on housing needs, designs and procurement processes. We are aiming to have the procurement documents ready for tender as soon as approval is obtained. Of course, we do not just want to have a white contractor come in and drop these houses there: we really want to make sure that we deliver on this commitment to having Anangu involved. If leases are approved by 10 July, the procurement process can be initiated, and we can secure appropriate builders. Obviously, we want to deliver this housing package as soon as we possibly can.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My second question relates to the subject of Aboriginal heritage legislation. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, Program 14, page 1.47, the target being to conduct a review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988. Can the minister outline the purpose of the state Aboriginal heritage legislation review?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The purpose is obviously to improve the act, and the current Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 is dated legislation that was enacted prior to the enactment of the commonwealth Native Title Act 1993, and indeed some other acts which have some important bearing on these questions—the River Murray Act 2003 and prior to the enactment of the Natural Resources Management Act 2004. These acts all affect the protection of Aboriginal heritage, but the Aboriginal Heritage Act in its present form does not recognise these linkages or the need to integrate. The review of the act will work to align the objects and powers of the Aboriginal Heritage Act so that the acts will recognise and integrate better with each other.

Another matter that the review will address is a process for identifying the people or groups that have the responsibility for making binding agreements. The system that currently operates is ad hoc. There is no process in the act for establishing which peoples have an interest in a particular heritage matter. As a result, there is no consistency about who gets consulted and on what basis and, obviously, this leads to questions and challenges about whether Aboriginal heritage matters are referred to the rightful people for consideration. This lack of certainty has the potential to cause undue cost and delay.

This government is strongly committed to the use of heritage agreements where possible and supports negotiations that will lead to certainty for the parties to the agreement. Unfortunately, the current legislation is not always helpful in this process and heritage considerations have not always been integrated into the development process. The review will address this situation in order to ensure that the agreements that are reached are binding and certainty will be achieved by Aboriginal people and developers alike.

All these factors have led to criticism of the act from both points of view—Aboriginal organisations' and developers'. Most stakeholders believe that the review is needed to ensure that the new Aboriginal heritage legislation provides a practical balance and that the broader communities need to protect and manage Aboriginal heritage and economic development and community prosperity. Both Queensland and New South Wales have in recent years enacted legislation that recognises and strengthens the role of Aboriginal people as the primary guardians of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Each state has promoted an agreement process that provides for the management and protection of Aboriginal heritage. This is what we hope this review will achieve—a process that will achieve agreements that are timely and effective and that can be backed by the certainty of an appropriate statutory power.

The government has recognised that the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act is timely and important by allocating, in this budget, \$300,000 in each of the next two financial years to ensure that the consultations and processes are properly undertaken. Whilst the outcomes of the review cannot be pre-empted, I believe that it is appropriate to take an optimistic view of the outcomes for both Aboriginal people and developers alike.

The CHAIR: I think it is probably appropriate now for us to move on to Ageing. I declare consideration of the proposed payments in relation to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, completed.

Membership:

Mrs Redmond substituted for Dr McFetridge.

DEPARTMENT FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, \$794,327,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES,
\$139,551,000

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S. Vardon, Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms A. Gale, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms S. Barr, Manager, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms J. Tilbrook, Acting Senior Coordinator, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Dr D. Caudrey, Executive Director, Office for the Ageing, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms J. Pickering, Executive Director, Domiciliary Care SA.

The CHAIR: I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and refer members to Portfolio Statement, Volume 3, part 10. Does the minister have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do. Although I am Minister for Ageing, this portfolio is effectively shared with many other ministers in government, and together we take a shared responsibility for the development of programs and services that cater for the needs of older South Australians. During February 2006 I launched Improving with Age, our ageing plan for South Australia, and I am pleased to advise that 40 projects, to a value of \$4 million, have been implemented since that time. Progress will continue into 2008-09, including in the areas of preventing elder abuse, the development of medical devices to address identified clinical needs, support for older people suffering from dementia, and a two-year pilot project to connect older people in our communities called Circle of Friends.

On Friday 13 June I attended a ministerial conference on ageing with Australian ministers responsible for ageing and aged care along with representatives of the Australian Local Government Association. This was a first. At this meeting it was agreed to work together to respond to Australia's changing ageing population and its challenges to Australia in the 21st century, including reducing social isolation, the future directions of the provision of community and residential care, aged-appropriate housing, and respite and support for carers (including grandparents). I am also pleased to note that South Australia, by implementing key elements of The Way Forward, a new strategy for community care, is a leading jurisdiction in the national reform process for community care.

A major initiative of the national community care reform is the Community Care Access Points demonstration project, which has a simple aim of creating an entry and assessment process for frail, older people accessing care that is simple and easy to navigate. Demonstrations are being undertaken in the western metropolitan area and the country areas of Gawler, Barossa, Lower North and Yorke Peninsula regions, and the project is expected to be fully operational across the two areas from 1 July 2008.

A joint commonwealth/state Home and Community Care program is one of our cornerstones. In 2001-02 total funding of the HACC program in South Australia has grown by 58 per cent, representing a significant increase in the number of services provided and people supported. HACC is the primary source of funding for a wide range of community care services, and in October 2007 I announced, with the then commonwealth minister for ageing, a \$13 million boost to HACC services across South Australia. This included \$10.4 million in new recurrent funding, of which \$7.5 million was allocated to 15 new recurrent and 62 expanded recurrent services, and \$2.9 million was allocated to indexation. A sum of \$2.5 million in one-off funding was

allocated to 178 one-off projects, including funding for all HACC services to assist with workforce development and minor capital needs. This brought the total level of recurrent HACC funding in 2007-08 to a record \$138.6 million, up from \$128.1 million in 2006-07.

On 27 March this year I submitted to the commonwealth a draft triennial plan which outlined the strategic directions and funding approaches for the HACC program in South Australia over the next three years and which sees increases in HACC funding in each of those years. These increases will strengthen the state government's commitment to meeting the significant and growing demand for home and community care services in South Australia.

The Department for Families and Communities, via the Office for the Ageing, is responsible for managing and administering the Seniors Card program, which consists of 270,000 cardholders. Within the Office for the Ageing we also look after the Carers Recognition Act, including the Carers Charter, which was enacted in December 2005. The first 12 months report against that act has occurred, and the current year reporting is in progress. The Office of Carers is developing a strategic plan for carers 2009-12. This is the first statewide plan, and will set the direction for priorities for the next four years.

The CHAIR: Does the member for Heysen wish to make a statement?

Mrs REDMOND: I do, Madam Chair, but I will do the omnibus questions first:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of the baseline data that was provided to the Shared Services Reform Office by each department or agency reporting to the minister: including the current total cost of the provision of payroll, finance, human resources, procurement, records management and information technology services in each department or agency reporting to the minister, as well as the full-time equivalent staffing numbers involved?

2. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors in 2007-08 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the consultant and contractor, cost, work undertaken and method of appointment?

3. For each department or agency reporting to the minister how many surplus employees there will be at 30 June 2008, and for each surplus employee what is the title or classification of the employee and the Total Employment Cost (TEC) of the employee?

4. In financial year 2006-07 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2007-08?

5. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister what is the estimated level of under expenditure for 2007-08 and has cabinet already approved any carryover expenditure into 2008-09? If so, how much?

6. (i) What was the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$100,000 or more per employee, and also as a sub-category the total number of employees with a total employment cost of \$200,000 or more per employee, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2008; and

(ii) Between 30 June 2007 and 30 June 2008, will the minister list job title and total employment cost of each position (with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more):

(a) which has been abolished; and

(b) which has been created?

7. For the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on all grants administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, listing the name of the grant recipient, the amount of the grant and the purpose of the grants and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction No. 15?

8. For all capital works projects listed in Budget Paper 5 that are the responsibility of the minister, will the minister list the total amounts spent to date on each project.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take those on notice.

Mrs REDMOND: I want to make a couple of opening comments in relation to this portfolio, which I enjoy having. Not only are we all ageing, but I have had a lifelong interest in ageing issues

and I specifically asked to keep this portfolio when I had to relinquish the portfolio of disability. I was sadly disappointed in the budget when I read through budget papers 1, 2 and 3 and there did not seem to be any mention of our older citizens and it was particularly noticeable in Budget Paper 2 (the budget speech) that there was no particular mention. I wondered how that fitted with the central message. I have a copy of the comments made by the minister in opening the conference Elder Abuse—It's Time For Action last year, in which he pointed out that we are (as is probably well known) the fastest ageing state in the nation.

We have the highest proportion of persons aged 65 and over, with one in seven at 2001 and anticipating that, by 2051, we will have one in three over the age of 65. We are living longer and stronger and the point was made that this represents a wake-up call for all of us on how best to respond to our ageing population. Of course, whilst there are many benefits in an ageing population (and I think we need to look at a lot of the positives), I was, therefore, sadly disappointed when I read the budget and could not find anything.

That was particularly so when I heard the Treasurer on Radio 891 the day after the budget. I want to comment a little about what the Treasurer had to say at the opening of his discussion with Bevan and Abraham on 891 on 6 June. David Bevan commented about targeting particular groups and said that previous governments had targeted pensioners in state budgets with assistance with utilities, adding, 'This time around nothing special for them.' Treasurer Foley responded:

Well, no, you're right...I think now three budgets ago we provided pensioners with a significant contribution—\$100 contribution towards their utility bills in that year when we could afford it.

David Bevan commented, and somewhat laughingly almost, 'I think that's been spent.' Treasurer Foley responded, 'Oh, yeah, of course.' Bevan went on to say, 'Three years ago. Things are a lot tougher now,' and Kevin Foley responded, 'Sure, I don't doubt that for one moment.' A little later on David Bevan said:

Did you give any thought to making a special allocation for pensioners, given the high rate of inflation, given the high cost of housing, given that it's so tough to be a pensioner on a fixed income right now; did you give any thought?

Treasurer Foley's response was, 'Oh, yeah, sure, serious thought,' to which David Bevan said, 'What was the budget submission that you were looking at for pensioners?' Kevin Foley responded:

What we do all in budgets is consider whether or not there are measures that we can undertake to assist a whole lot of groups and, indeed, pensioners were seriously considered for assistance, but there's a limit to our capacity to provide that assistance. We chose and made a decision that first home buyers would be our priority in this budget.

In the course of answering some of the questions this morning or this afternoon, can the minister respond on how on earth that sort of attitude by the government meets the central message from his opening of the elder abuse conference and, indeed, the central message of the whole program of ageing in this state, Improving with Age—Our Ageing Plan for South Australia? The central message is supposedly to support and encourage older people to make the most of opportunities available and that business, government agencies and the community sector need to recognise and respond to the opportunities and challenges of an older population. I seriously question whether that is, indeed, happening. They are my opening comments.

My first question is fairly general in relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, pages 10.22 and 10.28. I refer to both of those in the question. Across program 3, at page 10.22, there is a significant drop in both the employee benefits and costs and the supplies and services. The estimated result on employee benefits and costs for the 2007-08 year was \$174,504,000 going down to a budget for this year of \$170 million. So, it is a reduction of \$4 million. Similarly, there is an even bigger reduction in supplies and services, from \$94,801,000 to \$86,564,000. On page 10.28, which relates to the Office for the Ageing, there is indeed an increase from the estimated result of 2007-08 towards the budget of 2008-09.

Can the minister advise whether any part of the apparent reduction in employees, supplies and services (which appears on page 10.22) will affect the Office for the Ageing? In other words, will there be any reduction in staff or supplies and services for that office? Can the minister guarantee that in fact the overall reduction within program 3 does not affect the Office for the Ageing at all?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The answer is no. The member has gone to the specific Office for the Ageing budget and referred to the general one, where it looks as though there is a reduction. I think the burden of the member's question is that what appears to be a reduction will not be made up, if you like, out of the Office for the Ageing. The answer is no, it will not.

I think that the explanation for the reduction is more of a technical issue around the way in which FBT compensation, which had previously been paid to us by the commonwealth government, comes to an end, and that is not reflected in the future for certain employees—not Office for the Ageing employees, as that encompasses disability. It amounts to other employees.

Mrs REDMOND: I want to be sure about that because, theoretically, it would be possible for there to be an overall budget increase in the office but, because of the overall program reduction at the beginning, for there still to be—

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That won't happen.

Mrs REDMOND: I refer to the highlights on pages 10.13 and 10.14 and the first dot point at the top of page 10.14, which states, 'Continued to expand basic Home and Community Care maintenance and support for frail old people and their carers'.

I am sure that we all appreciate the rate of expansion, but how does it compare with the anticipated need in the area? As I indicated in my opening statement (and I think the minister did in his), we clearly have an ageing population. It is anticipated that we will need to expand the HACC program, but to what extent is its expansion keeping pace with the anticipated need in this sector?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is one of the programs that is quite well funded. It will receive a very substantial increase for precisely the reasons the member has identified. Over the next three financial years, the HACC program will increase from \$149.3 million in 2008-09 to \$161 million in 2009-10 and to \$173.6 million in 2010-11. That is a growth of \$10.7 million, \$11.8 million and \$12.5 million respectively, and it exceeds the CPI increase: it is a 25 per cent increase over those three years. Will it meet every need? That is probably hard to say, but it is certainly growing at a rate that exceeds the CPI and accounts for the fact that there is growth in the need in this area.

Mrs REDMOND: Do we have any sort of data set on which to base anticipated need? Minister, you and I both know that the sole person household is the fastest growing sector in terms of our housing in this state generally. If we know that we have an ageing population, and we know that we have more people living alone, we will need some sort of statistical basis upon which to anticipate where that need will head.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have a measure at the moment called the Potential Client Population Database, which tries to measure this growth. However, we are working with the commonwealth to get a more sophisticated method of measuring it. There is no doubt that, in the future, not only the phenomenon of the ageing of the population but also the capacity of people to care for them may change. So, we are trying to get a much clearer understanding of that, and it is one of the outcomes of the last Ministerial Council on the Ageing: we sought to improve the quality of the data we have to plan. We have a planning tool, but we are seeking to get one that is more sophisticated.

Mrs REDMOND: I note the statistic to which the minister already alerted me, namely, the increase to \$174 million over the next three years. It is an increase of 25 per cent, but is that increase consistent in terms of both state and federal involvement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes; it is. It is based on the 62:38 per cent split, and it rises by the same proportion.

Mrs REDMOND: The next dot point on page 10.14 states, 'Established a register of South Australian retirement villages and advanced investigations of breaches of the Retirement Villages Act 1987'. As the minister knows, this is a particularly favourite topic of mine, having had considerable involvement with problem retirement villages prior to my coming into this place. First, can the minister confirm whether the register now has on it every retirement village in the state and whether the details of all those villages are up to date?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We anticipated that we would get a question about retirement villages from the member for Heysen. I have a briefing which I think answers those questions. OFTA continues to administer the act and deal with questions of investigations of non-compliance. During 2007-08 we had 456 inquiries from residents, families, administering authorities and the general public; attended seven hearings at the RTT; and conducted 16 mediations between residents and administering authorities.

Amendments to the act, which came into effect, provided for the register on 1 July 2007; that obligation now exists. As a result of the register, the number of retirement villages in South Australia is 450; their location and the number of independent living units is 14,367; and the

number of serviced apartments (1,228) are now definitively known. However, we are following that up with a further survey, which is occurring as we speak. The estimated number of residents is now much clearer at approximately 20,000. Therefore, there were many more than initially expected which, I suppose, is not surprising.

A long-standing dispute between the residents and the administering authority of the Hillsview Retirement Village has been resolved. On 6 June, the District Court upheld a determination by the tribunal in favour of the residents. We provided some financial assistance to challenge the appeal by the administering authority, demonstrating our commitment. We thought it important that, when the new act was enacted, we send a very clear message to administering authorities that residents will be supported in cases where they have been inappropriately dealt with.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.28. Will the minister advise what funding has been allocated by the state government to ensure that older people stay involved in their communities and not become isolated and marginalised?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: On 18 March 2008, following recommendations of assessment panels under the auspice of the Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing, I was pleased to approve funding to 78 community organisations to help older South Australians remain connected with their community. This important grant funding is provided to groups throughout the state, and includes community organisations, clubs, educational and training institutions, arts and cultural groups and organisations, such as museums, libraries, theatres, self-help groups, recreation and sporting groups, and volunteer agencies.

The first funding program is the Positive Ageing Development Grants, which are worth up to \$25,000 (one-off) and which fit into one of three themes: enabling choice and independence; participation and learning; and positive perceptions. In 2007-08, a total of 15 Positive Ageing Development Grants were approved, totalling \$200,000.

The second funding program is Grants for Seniors, which are worth up to \$5,000 (one-off) to help organisations with smaller tasks such as buying equipment or paying for an instructor to run activities. In 2007-08, a total of 63 Grants for Seniors were approved, totalling \$134,319. Also, \$50,000 was provided to the Council on the Ageing to celebrate Every Generation in October 2008.

This state government is committed to ensuring that older people are able to play an active role in their communities and exercise their rights as citizens, and it will provide a further \$400,000 in funding for the Grants for Seniors and Positive Ageing Development Grants in 2008-09. Advertising of the 2008-09 Grants for Seniors and Positive Ageing Development Grants is planned towards the end of this year.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.28. Can the minister provide an update in relation to the increase in funding for the Home and Community Care Program? I know that you have touched briefly on this matter previously in response to the member for Heysen, but I would appreciate further clarification.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the member for Bright. I know that this program is particularly important for her electorate, and I understand its significance. The HACC program is a joint commonwealth and state initiative, which provides a very flexible way of meeting the needs for basic maintenance and support services for frail older people, younger people with disabilities and their carers.

In regards to the funding of \$149.3 million planned for 2008-09, which I mentioned earlier, we will make a 38 per cent contribution, raising total funding to \$173.6 million in 2010-11, amounting to a 7.7 per cent increase in the amount of funds provided by South Australia in 2007-08, outstripping inflation by a considerable proportion.

The number of people receiving a HACC service in 2008-09 is forecast to be over 104,000. This represents an increase of 4,000 people on top of the estimated 100,000 who received a service in 2007-08. The matching contributions will play an important role in ensuring that we further strengthen our commitment to this growing demand for Home and Community Care services. It provides an important way of overcoming isolation in the community for people who may have challenges with mobility. It also provides a very important hospital avoidance capacity, which is critical not only for people's wellbeing but also the financial viability of our health system.

It is a very important program. Currently, it is the subject of discussions at a national level, through the COAG process, about its future and its relationship with Disability Services programs. It is receiving very substantial support by both federal and state Labor governments.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.13. Can the minister advise what SA Access Points are, and who will benefit from the project?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The South Australian Community Care Access Points provide a point for frail older people and their carers to call for information, have their needs identified and then supported to access the most appropriate community care services. This initiative will be available from July this year. Anyone who has had an older parent and has had to navigate the processes of finding care for them will know what a maddening experience it is. I do not know anybody who has been part of that who has not found it very difficult.

It beggars belief to think that the older person could do it by themselves because it is hard enough for well-educated and resourced people to navigate their way through the system. These South Australian community care access points will streamline people's access to community care, reduce the run-around and the number of times people need to retell their stories. They will provide a single point of call for information, needs identification and access to services.

South Australian community care access points are part of a network that has been developed in response to a COAG request for entry and assessment to HACC to be simplified. South Australia is implementing South Australian Community Care Access Points in one metropolitan region and one country region through government agencies. The following regions have been selected: western metropolitan Adelaide under the auspices of Domiciliary Care SA and country areas of Gawler, Barossa, Lower North and Yorke Peninsula under the auspices of Country Health SA.

The government intends to roll out the Community Care Access Points across South Australia from now until 2011. The commonwealth government through HACC common arrangements funding (\$3.4 million over four years for South Australia) and The Way Forward Research and Development Fund (\$400,000 over two years) has provided resources for establishing the community care access points, as well as progressing other common arrangements as agreed under the HACC review agreement. The national evaluation being undertaken by KPMG will make recommendations on improvements to the community care access points and their potential rollout across Australia.

Mrs REDMOND: I would like to go back to the previous answer. I want to explore the Retirement Villages Act and its operation a little bit more. I am pleased to note that the Hillview Retirement Village issue is now resolved. What was the level of financial assistance provided and in what way was that provided in terms of that appeal?

I know from my experience that, going to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, residents could be out of pocket by several thousand dollars even in the case of a successful argument in that tribunal, given that it is generally a no-cost jurisdiction, and I am just curious to what extent the government has been able to help that issue.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I stress that this is not a general policy, but in relation to this case we chose to make the offer of indemnification to the parties. I think ultimately there was a mediated settlement. I just need to check whether the terms were confidential.

I think there might be continuing negotiations on the extent of the state's liability, so I would prefer not to mention a sum which might then lock us in to having to pay that sum. We have certainly stood behind the residents to ensure that they are not out of pocket, but it is a substantial sum and, unless they were people of some means, you would imagine that it would be quite a disincentive to pursuing any action even though it is meant to be a non-litigious forum.

Mrs REDMOND: My experience in that forum is that the Residential Tenancies Tribunal is designed to hear one or two hour disputes between landlords and tenants with no-one represented, but I certainly had a case that went for over a week and, in spite of winning, to the tune of I think from memory \$46,000 for the resident, when it came to the question of costs, they were only awarded on the Magistrates Court scale, notwithstanding that that amount would be beyond the Magistrates Court limits. That meant that, even with my meagre costs, they were still several thousand dollars out of pocket, so it is a major problem. Of course the other thing about that tribunal is that, because of the way it is structured, it is not designed for taking of transcript, so that can also be problematic.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is always the dilemma, I think, in a no-cost jurisdiction that people are discouraged from taking proceedings if there might be a costs order against them—that is the argument in favour of no costs—but if they win they are still left out of pocket, so that is the dilemma that we see in these types of tribunals.

I think we need to reflect on the way this act continues to operate, and maybe there needs to be some steps that can occur in different types of litigation. I think you are right that the day-to-day disputes where both parties are unrepresented is obviously a very different proposition from fully-fledged litigation.

Mrs REDMOND: I refer to the third dot point—'implemented the second round of Kickstart projects'—which you mentioned in your opening comments. The second part of that is 'develop new research initiatives'. What are the new research initiatives contemplated by that highlight?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The research initiatives that are proposed are the continued support for the Medical Devices Partnering Program led by Flinders University, preventing the financial abuse of older people by a family member, and designing and evaluating older person centred models of family mediation.

Mrs REDMOND: Can I just clarify whether they are the 2007-08 highlights or the targets for 2008-09, because there is a similar dot-point on page 10.13: 'continue to implement the second round of Kickstart projects'.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am with you. I gave you 2008-09, you need 2007-08. The previous one is the State of Ageing collaboration between the state's three universities to provide a snapshot of past, current and future issues and the implications for South Australia with an ageing population. This includes the development of scenario planning tools to assist and influence future policy and service directions; an ARC linkage project, Couples: Relationships in Later Life, which seeks to explore the dynamic of couple relationships in later life, provide an in-depth examination of how couples from the age of 70 and well into their 90s negotiate the challenges of ageing; and contribute directly to the national priority on Ageing Well, Ageing Productively, which is a national process.

Mrs REDMOND: Just to clarify that, it is basically research carried out by one or more of our local universities?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

Mrs REDMOND: Just out of curiosity, the very last dot point on page 10.14 in the highlights states, 'reduced energy usage by 10 per cent throughout the portfolio'. Where does that show in terms of its financial benefit? How is it achieved and where does it show up? I could not find anything specifically anywhere else.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think you are looking at 2007-08, which is reduced energy usage by 10 per cent throughout the portfolio. It is speaking to a whole of government target around the greening of government, so it does not necessarily find its expression in any particular portfolio.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is measured. I can tell you that, for 2007-08, it is on target to improve energy efficiencies within the portfolio by an estimated 22 per cent from the baseline created in 2001. The sorts of things we did were print device consolidation programs, so we reduced the number of printers; implementation of an energy information and data gathering system which tracks energy usage within the department; the setting up of green pilot programs to provide live examples for staff to follow energy efficiency, amongst other green initiatives; our new office in Mount Gambier will be five-star rated; we have approximately 131 hybrid electric vehicles; and a whole range of staff work behaviours and practices to incorporate energy efficiencies. In direct answer to your question, I think we track our energy usage. I will ask the well-known greenie within our agency, the finance officer, to answer that.

Mr ULLIANICH: I will try to answer that briefly. In terms of the question the member asked, it is not directly observable in the financial information that you see, because the financial statements are generated at a high level for the portfolio. In actual fact, it is impacting on the goods and services line, when you look at the portfolio statement of income. Internally, of course, there are much more defined levels of recording expenditure, so you would have expenditure of fuel and expenditure against energy, in terms of electricity. When you look at the goods and services line, that is where it is. The goods and services line is impacted by many factors, including indexation. So, in a \$1.3 billion budget, it is very difficult to observe movements around the margin in what you are saving in energy.

Mrs REDMOND: When you say savings on fuel and so on, I assume that is savings on quantity of fuel, because I would assume that the cost of fuel having gone up as much as it has, that would more than offset any saving that you have in terms of the quantity?

Mr ULLIANICH: Correct. Effectively, what I am saying is that, but for those initiatives, the fuel cost would be higher.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My question is on the issue of Improving with Age—Our Ageing Plan for South Australia. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.28. Will the minister provide examples of how the implementation of the government's ageing plan is assisting South Australians?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the member for Little Para. Since the implementation of the Improving with Age—Our Ageing Plan for South Australia, over 40 projects, to the value of over \$4 million, have been funded. I will give some examples of the way in which they have been assisting older South Australians. First, the recruitment of nine community care consultants across the state by Housing SA. Housing SA received \$594,000 in funding over an 18-month period for those workers to connect older public housing residents to appropriate services and to assist them to maintain independent living in minimised social isolation.

There is the program Circle of Friends, which consists of people who are intentionally invited to come together in friendship and support for the purposes of protecting their interests in the future. The Circle of Friends program gives isolated older people a support network as well as to keep them connected with their communities. The project has been funded to the value of \$100,000 during 2007 and \$45,000 during the 2008-09 financial year. There has been increasing discussion recently about the lack of those tangible and intangible supports, at least in many parts of our community, than once when perhaps there was a greater degree of support between neighbours.

The Circle of Friends project is designed to recreate that sense of neighbourliness by connecting people in the same location with each other and their community. Indeed, there is a similar, very interesting program in the disability area in the Adelaide Hills in Mount Barker, which is another example of the way in which people can be linked together informally. It sounds like a small thing but people who do not get out are isolated.

One example I can give is of a person with a disability being taken to the local football match. Now that football club has essentially adopted him, and that has become now a regular part of his life, and he is now connected to a new community. A very powerful but small indicator of the value of that is that a lot of the people who are the clients of Disability SA up in this office would be on the doorstep on Monday morning waiting for a worker to come in, largely because they have not spoken to anybody for the whole weekend. That has not been happening. It is interesting how profoundly that can change people's lives. I would like to see that project rolled out further.

Other examples include the Aboriginal Grandparents Respite and Support project which was funded to the value of \$125,000; a project to identify and report on current service responses to carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds which was delivered across the state, funded to the value of \$85,000; Grandparents Respite and Support services for grandparents who are providing full-time care for their grandchildren; Time For Kids which will specifically target children referred to the program by Families SA and funding to the value of \$50,000 has been provided.

A Seniors and the Law booklet was developed to provide older people with information about consumer and legal rights and responsibilities. Funded to the value of \$50,000, this booklet has recently been reprinted due to demand. The Australian Longitudinal Study of Ageing's '15 years of ageing in South Australia' was commissioned to provide information for policy makers, service providers and care professionals on population ageing and its consequences. Flinders University Centre for Ageing Studies received \$70,000 and the report was delivered in January 2008.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My second question relates to the issue of the register of retirement villages. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.28. Will the minister please advise the status of the Register of Retirement Villages, a requirement under the Retirement Villages Act 1987?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The updated status of that register is that, while it has identified 450 villages, including 14,367 independent living units and 1,228 serviced apartments, we want to ensure that that information is accurate. We have sent out a survey which has required

them to respond voluntarily. We have done some checking and we have seen an extraordinary increase in the numbers of retirement villages than perhaps we expected were out there. So, that in itself is an example of an important step forward.

It comes as a direct result of the changes that were supported by both parties to the Retirement Villages Act 1987. We are in the process of carrying out a further survey and we will have follow-up checks. We want to communicate more broadly with the sector to ensure that we are not missing any particular retirement village. The data generated through the register is of particular interest to the retirement village industry and planning authorities, and we believe that it will assist us in developing better public policy in the retirement villages sector.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My last question relates to the Seniors Card. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.28. Can the minister please inform us about the status of the government's Seniors Card program and advise of progress in relation to transport reciprocity for interstate Seniors Card holders?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Seniors Card program continues to be popular with the seniors community. The card is a lifetime card and, in the early part of 2007-08, a new design was produced and distributed to all cardholders. The Great Southern Railway joined the Seniors Card program as a platinum sponsor of the 2007-08 Seniors Card directory with a possible two-year continuation. The sponsorship significantly reduced the net cost to government by offsetting expenditure associated with the production, printing and distribution of the directory which is provided to cardholders on an annual basis.

In relation to the national transport reciprocity entitlement for holders of the Seniors Card, South Australia is in agreement with the proposal. We are now awaiting the outcome of an out of session paper which is to be provided to the Council of the Australian Federation Secretariat once further discussions between the governments of New South Wales and Victoria are held. Currently, the government offers South Australian Seniors Card holders 50 per cent concession on public transport on any day of the year. With the implementation of the reciprocal transport scheme, holders of interstate Seniors Cards will also be entitled to the same 50 per cent concession on public transport on any day. Details of the implementation plan will be developed during this year to meet the planned implementation date of January 2009.

Mrs REDMOND: While I was listening to the minister's answer to the previous question about the Retirement Villages Act and that register, I thought I might suggest to the minister a couple of things that we might want to look at incorporating into the information held departmentally. One is a copy of the basic contract used by each provider because there have been instances of people changing the terms of contracts unilaterally that can become problematic. The other would be some information—and I do not know whether one could get it without breaching privacy provisions—on the age base of people in the retirement village because the odd thing about it is that, if the village is very successful and good at what it does, the average age in the village is likely to go up over a period of time and, as we age and have more ageing in place rather than moving, I think we will need to know about that.

The question I want to ask relates to page 10.10 which is the financial commentary. Just below the two dot points on that page the total operating expenditure is dealt with. Towards the end of the paragraph it says:

This is partially offset by once-off funding received in 2007-08 for Tregenza Avenue Aged Care Services—

I know that the member for Little Para will be interested in my questions about this because I would like to know what the details were of what has happened to Tregenza Avenue Aged Care Services. Was it sold and, if so, for how much? What is the facility now used for and what happened to the residents?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Following the closure of Tregenza Avenue Aged Care Service, Domiciliary Care SA has been working with DFC facilities services to progress the redevelopment of the Tregenza buildings. It is anticipated this will provide office accommodation for Domiciliary Care's northern teams, which are currently located at the Lyell McEwin Health Service, the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre and a private tenancy at Mawson Lakes, and \$4 million has been allocated to that process.

DFC has engaged Brown Falconer Group as the lead professional consultant and preliminary documentation and plans were finalised in February this year. In depth consultation has commenced with the local community and regular progress meetings have been held with Playford

council. On 11 March a development application was lodged—this was approved in May 2008—and finalisation of the work is underway.

In relation to the residents of Tregenza Avenue Aged Care Service, that is being managed by the health portfolio so the questions should probably be directed there. However, we understand that the residents have all been relocated to other facilities in the northern suburbs, and I think there are potentially some transitional arrangements as the residents are in the final stages of transitioning from this facility to their ultimate destination. This was a facility run by the health department through, I think, Domiciliary Care; however, when Domiciliary Care was transferred this issue was resolved as part of that set of arrangements.

Mrs REDMOND: I am a little confused now, from that response. How did that lead to once-off funding received into the department?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I believe there was a need to reconfigure the buildings for their new use.

Mrs REDMOND: That still does not explain how we got once-off funding coming in—

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Sorry. Health provided funding to us to change the buildings to a new use.

Mrs REDMOND: I guess the most important issue I wanted to take up in relation to Tregenza Avenue Aged Care Service is that of relocation. I appreciate that the residents have been relocated to other facilities in the northern suburbs—which is, to some extent at least, a blessing—but anyone with experience in aged care knows that residents of aged care facilities, if they have even a low level of dementia, can find having to change from home to a care facility, or from one care facility to another, completely disorienting. It can be the trigger for a major downward spiral. What steps were taken by the department to keep track of what happened to the mental state of the residents in terms of that transition?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is not the responsibility of this particular agency; however, just through communication with the Department of Health (which has responsibility for the care of the residents and for managing the whole process) we know that enormous care was taken with that process and that it was very well managed.

Mrs REDMOND: I am not disputing that they took care with it; I am interested in whether anyone tried to do any sort of assessment of level of functioning pre and post relocation. My experience is that there can be a terribly adverse effect from moving someone who has even minor dementia. It can trigger a quite dramatic downward trend of their capacity to even understand where they are, if you take them out of familiar surroundings and put them into unfamiliar ones.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: They are very good questions, but they should be directed to the Minister for Health. Apparently he has his estimates later this week; I am certain he will be able to supply you with answers in terms of what steps have been taken.

Mrs REDMOND: Regarding page 10.14, I was puzzled by the first dot point at the top of that page—that is, 'Promulgate the Carers Recognition Act 2005.' Can the minister explain why on earth, in 2008-09, we have a target of promulgating an act passed in 2005?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The nature of the Carers Recognition Act is, I suppose, one of awareness. The very nature of the act itself aims to raise the profile of carers and the existence of this act and its powers. Lest this be just a series of words that sits on the statute book, we know we have to go out and promulgate it, we have to go out and undertake education programs. The Office for Carers is developing training and education packages to educate and inform more than 100 Home and Community Care program agencies about carers, the act and its charter. I think the great anxiety of the carers, especially through their association, is that the power of this act will not be realised. It will only be realised if we go out and explain to people what is in the act, explain the obligations that exist within the act, and get people to make real this concept that we are trying to establish.

It was not very long ago that we did not even have a word for this phenomenon, and there are still some people who do not even fully appreciate that they are a carer. Some people simply see it as part of the normal obligations of being a family member. There is a lot of work to do to educate people that they have rights and also, for the agencies that deal with people who are carers, that they need to respect carers in a particular way.

Mrs REDMOND: So you are not using 'promulgate' in a legal sense of commencement of the act, but in a more—

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No; not promulgate in the sense of proclaim. I suppose 'promote' is a better word.

[Sitting suspended from 13:01 to 14:00]

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S. Vardon, Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Dr D. Caudrey, Executive Director, Office for the Ageing, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms S. Barr, Manager, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr G. Myers, Coordinator Strategic Projects, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms A. Gale, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms S. Carman, Executive Director, Office for Disability and Client Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms L. Young, Executive Director, Disability SA, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms Z. Nowak, Director, Office for Disability and Client Services, Department for Families and Communities.

The CHAIR: Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do. This budget is about delivering quality services to South Australians living with a disability. The government recognises that people with disability have the aspirations that many of us take for granted:

- the opportunity to make choices;
- to be in control;
- the opportunity to have a home;
- to have suitable employment; and
- to participate in meaningful activities that connect them with their community.

South Australia's Strategic Plan reflects those aspirations in its targets to increase access for people with disabilities to community-based accommodation, day options for school leavers and employment in the public sector. In relation to these, during 2007-08, 53 people moved from institutions to community-based accommodation, 63 new school leavers were able to access the day options program, and we commenced planning to build on the processes already in place to make the government an inclusive employer of people with disabilities.

The past year saw the continuing establishment of Disability SA as a single service system that is easy for individuals and families to understand and access. Disability policy development in South Australia has been supported by the new Minister's Disability Advisory Council, comprising people living with the experience of disability.

The Companion Card was introduced, which enables a carer or companion to accompany a person with a disability at participating sporting, recreational and community events for the price of one ticket. Demand for disability services continues to grow across Australia. We are working very hard to respond to that demand and meet the needs of people with disabilities and their carers. We have provided a once-off funding injection of \$5 million to help address the waiting list for equipment services. This will provide much needed equipment for children and adults with disabilities to support their independence.

South Australia has secured \$72.9 million in commonwealth funding over the next four years for new services, which is being matched by the state. This takes the total extra spending to \$145.8 million over the next four years, including \$72.9 million from the commonwealth, \$26 million

in new state government spending, \$46.9 million committed in last year's budget over the next four years; in addition, \$11 million provided by the state government during 2007-08. This new investment will deliver approximately 2,139 additional places in disability services over four years. There will be supported accommodation for 92 people who are urgently waiting, and support for 11 people who will receive help at home, so that they can leave hospital. We are providing an extra 1,295 respite places, helping families with the burden of ongoing care, including 60 places in the rehabilitation programs for people with a brain injury. There will be 102 packages of intensive home support for people with a disability, so that they do not have to go into nursing homes or group homes. There will be 650 individual care packages.

The commonwealth government also provided one-off capital funding of \$8 million to South Australia for supported accommodation, which will provide up to 55 new group home places. There is also \$5.3 million extra from the commonwealth over three years from 2007-08 to increase service providers' capacity to deliver respite. This will deliver about 337,000 hours of respite each year.

The commonwealth government commenced this program in 2007-08. In 2008-09, it will transfer funding—\$3.1 million—to South Australia for the remaining two years of the program for existing contracts with respite providers. These new services are an example of what we can achieve by working together. We will continue to work closely with the commonwealth government and other states and territories in the coming year to finalise a new commonwealth, states and territories disability agreement, and to contribute to the development of a national disability strategy.

In addition to the national disability agenda, the key areas of focus for disability services in South Australia will be improving the evidence base for planning and funding of disability services through strengthened information and analysis activities, the development of a framework to guide funding of the non-government sector, and implementing service approaches which offer real choice and control for people with disabilities.

I am confident that the new services and systems we are putting in place, together with the progressive increases in investment, will build a quality disability service system to deliver to people with disabilities, their families and carers.

Mrs REDMOND: I have no opening statement and I have already read the omnibus questions. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.26, the footnotes to sub-program 3.2. In particular, I refer to footnote (e): 'The department will launch a statewide equipment service from July 2008.' What is the service and why is it being introduced?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Essentially, it flows from the process of the coming together of the two particular equipment programs. The function of the Independent Living Equipment Program (ILEP) is now managed by Disability SA and is being reviewed in partnership with Domiciliary Care SA, with a view to developing a statewide equipment service. Disability SA will maintain the assessment and prescription functions for equipment with procurement, repairs and maintenance functions transferring to Domiciliary Care's South Australian Domiciliary Equipment Service, resulting in one statewide equipment service.

By July 2008, Domiciliary Care will manage the procurement, repairs, maintenance and replacement of Disability SA owned equipment under the new statewide equipment service. Disability SA, through the statewide equipment service, will have improved tracking and management of equipment on loan. As it happens, at the moment, Domiciliary Care already has a barcoded system with its equipment. That had not occurred in relation to the Disability SA or the old ILEP scheme. That will now be built in so that there is a common method for tracking equipment. Disability SA will redirect any efficiencies achieved from the above into reducing the existing equipment waiting list. The equipment service will run through Domiciliary Equipment Service's main warehouse located in Netley.

The benefits of the new service include: improved safety and equity for clients by adopting consistent practices around the management of equipment; reduced duplication in the delivery of equipment and the maintenance of stock; economies of scale in regard to purchasing and contract management; maximised recycling of equipment (where economical) by both divisions, utilising equipment from a single equipment pool—all equipment items to be tracked, maintained and replaced in a planned program; minimised waiting period for the delivery of routine stock equipment; reduction in cost of repairs with increased in-house services and fewer contracted services; comprehensive reporting and costing for planning purposes; clear lines of responsibility for budget expenditure and reporting; improved and coordinated systems for the assessment of

waiting lists; reduced risk of client injury due to routine scheduled maintenance and replacement of equipment; and appropriate governance and performance management structure in place to deal with ongoing risks associated with equipment.

Repairs and maintenance for all equipment issued to clients of Disability SA will continue to be provided with this enhanced service. A communication program has commenced to inform clients and stakeholders of the new program.

Mrs REDMOND: Were people with a disability consulted?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

Mrs REDMOND: Can I have some details of the consultation process?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I attended one of the consultations, but I will provide details of what the department has done. Our particular consultation process is through the Disability Advisory Network (DANSA), which provides us with, essentially, clients and consumers—people who use equipment. The reform processes were discussed in detail with them. We also have the Ministerial Disability Advisory Council which provides me with high-level advice. The ongoing process of consultation with disability groups through the department has also been in place.

Mrs REDMOND: In my experience of this government across all sectors, when you say 'consult' it means something entirely different. Will people with a disability continue to have the same level of choice of service provider as they did under the ILEP program?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: One method for the provision of equipment comes under the Independent Living Equipment Program (ILEP). From the point of view of people with a disability, the provision of service was a monopoly. Currently, two schemes—one that was operating for older people and one for people with disabilities—have been brought into one single statewide service. From that perspective, the provision of the equipment still comes from the one source.

Mrs REDMOND: My understanding is that there was a level of choice; for example, someone might come to a home to repair a piece of equipment. The question is more directed at that and whether there is a choice, because it was not always the same provider.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The intention of the new system is to ensure that basically we have the most effective maintenance provider available, so we want someone who is able to speedily meet the needs of someone within a particular area. There is a panel process, with a range of providers on that panel. Within the context of that panel, there will be choice, but we certainly want people on that panel who are able to effectively provide a service to the people with a disability.

I suppose the broader answer relates to the work that we are doing in relation to self-managed funding. Obviously, the member would be aware that we have asked the Ministerial Disability Advisory Council to prepare a report, which I expect to see soon, which opens the whole question of the way in which people control their resources. That is the ultimate expression of choice, and people will have the capacity to make choices. Assuming that the Ministerial Disability Advisory Council recommends that we adopt such a scheme and that the process is supported by government, it ultimately speaks to the most fundamental control of choice; that is, you have the money to be able to determine precisely where that equipment is provided. The government provider of equipment would be just one possible means by which equipment can be supplied. If it is presumably not a competitive supplier or providing quality service people will not choose it.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.3. How will the Bedford Homes for 100 Initiative contribute to increasing the number of people with disabilities housed in supported and community-based accommodation?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Homes for 100 project is a partnership between the state government and Bedford Industries aimed at creating homes in the community for 100 people with disabilities. Bedford industries is, of course, a leading provider of supported employment and other services for people with an intellectual disability. This project is a significant step forward in increasing our capacity to provide purpose-built housing for people with a disability on low incomes who might otherwise find extreme difficulty in finding affordable and appropriate housing options in the community.

The state government has contributed \$5 million as a once-off grant from the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, which has been matched by \$5 million from the Bedford Foundation.

Potential tenants will be selected from both Disability SA and Bedford waiting lists for people suitable for and interested in community-based living. Housing stock for the project will comprise a mix of new developments constructed by Housing SA or acquisitions from existing Housing SA stock.

In October 2007 the first seven homes in Enfield and Clearview were made available. These homes have housed five Disability SA clients and four Bedford clients. A total of \$1.6 million has been expended on this project during 2007-08. During 2008-09, \$3 million will be expended and development will begin on up to 11 new homes in Dover Gardens and Daw Park. This outcome is on track to achieving the project's overall target of approximately 35 new homes in the community for South Australians living with a disability.

Ms FOX: My question is in relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.23. Could the minister advise of current negotiations occurring in relation to the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The third Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement expired on 30 June 2007 but it was extended until 31 December 2007 by agreement between the previous commonwealth government, states and territories. With the election of the new commonwealth government, there has been a new policy approach in relation to the next CSTDA. The current agreement has been extended to 31 December 2008 to allow for consideration of the nature of the agreement and the priorities to be addressed.

At the same time, commonwealth, state and territory governments have agreed to the reform of specific purpose payments such as the CSTDA. Reforms are anticipated to include rationalising the number of SPPs and a focus on outcomes and outputs when determining SPP arrangements. The proposed timeframe for implementation of a new SPP framework is January 2009.

In the interim, it is anticipated that the current CSTDA will be rolled over on the basis of current funding and indexation parameters. In its election commitments, the commonwealth government indicated it will bring \$962 million allocated by the previous government to its disability assistance package back into the CSTDA, to be matched by states and territories. South Australia's population share is \$72.9 million over four years.

I mentioned earlier the additional commitments that we made and the fact that this will provide supported accommodation for 92 people who are urgently waiting, including 11 who need help to get home from hospital, because there are a number of people who are presently in hospital who can leave but for which there needs to be a place. There will be 1,295 respite places helping families with a burden of ongoing care, and 60 places for rehabilitation programs for people with brain injury. There will be 102 packages of intensive support and 655 individual packages of care. We also have the additional \$8 million provided for on a capital basis for supported accommodation places, and that funding is not required to be matched.

The commonwealth government has also indicated that it will be seeking major reform of disability services to be delivered through the next agreement in conjunction with the National Disability Strategy. Disability ministers have agreed on the following priorities for the next agreement:

- Better measurement of the current and future need for disability services. (This is something that states and territories in the past chose not to do because they did not like what they found when they did measure, that is, that the need is enormous. So I think it is a substantial step forward that we are going to seriously measure the need, and that will be a very challenging outcome when it is known.)
- Moving towards national population benchmarks for key disability service types.
- Making older carers a priority.
- Quality improvement systems.
- Improved service planning to make sure it is simple to access services.
- Focusing on early intervention, lifelong planning and increasing independence and social participation of people with disabilities.
- Improved workforce capacities.
- Targeting indigenous people with disabilities.

The next agreement is not only to secure more growth funding but also to commence building a disability system for the future. It is true to say that a lot of what we hear in the public debate focuses on the 18,000 or so people who receive disability services; yet, when we see the actual numbers of people who have disabilities in our community, it is a much larger number than that, and their lives are substantially affected by their disability. We know there are another 68,000 people who receive a disability support pension yet they do not come near our services system in terms of the sorts of things we are talking about in this budget process. That is people on disability support pensions.

There are, of course, many other thousands who have a disability who are not on a disability service pension. It is a very large slice of the South Australian population who have a disability, so a disability strategy that just focuses on that 18,000 really misses the needs and concerns of that very large group of people. The National Disability Strategy will sit on top of the disability services agreement, which is the one that provides the services that we are perhaps more familiar with.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.23. Can the minister advise what the Companion Card is, and how successful it has been since its introduction?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I launched the Companion Card on 3 December 2007, the International Day of People with Disabilities. I launched the card at a formal function at the Pavilion restaurant at Veale Gardens. Peter Goers was the master of ceremonies and provided his customary wit and entertainment.

The Companion Card enables companions assisting eligible persons (that is, people with a severe disability) to access free entry to community events and activities, and public transport at both state and national level. The card, which is free and valid for up to five years, is for people with permanent disabilities who require attendant care support. Cards can be used interstate in other participating states, including Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania.

As at May 2008 over 750 applications have been received since the launch and processed through Disability SA. Some 622 cards have been processed, printed and sent to individuals. National Disability Services SA has recruited 20 affiliate organisations that now accept the companion card, including the South Australian National Football League, Wallis and Hoyts cinemas, Adelaide and Monarto zoos and the South Australian Museum.

It is true that this card only works because of the goodwill of the participating organisations. We are hoping to encourage many more. During the course of this year we will seek to promote this initiative and enrol new affiliates to the scheme, and we will work with the commonwealth to try to expand the scheme to other states that are not yet participating.

Mrs REDMOND: I am still on footnote (e) at the bottom of page 10.26 on the statewide equipment service being launched in July. Will there be any change to the list of equipment available? In particular, will scooters be removed from the list or removed from availability for any sector, such as particular age groups?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There is no change to eligibility as a consequence of the creation of the statewide service.

Mrs REDMOND: Will the Independent Living Centre Display Centre continue to operate without significant change?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There has not been any decision taken about the showroom. We understand that there will need to continue to be a showroom as part of the activities, although it has not been settled whether the showroom will remain precisely in its current form or at this location. That is a matter which is under consideration but which has not yet been decided.

Mrs REDMOND: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.23: Community Accommodation and Care. Why is the target for this year only an increase of 70 services across government and non-government organisations when last year there was a departmental increase almost double that of 135?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Can I make sure I understand the question? Why has it only gone from 505 to 935 (which is a large increase) compared with 550 to 560? It looks like a smaller increase when previously it was a larger increase. The answer is that the previous year's figures reported the whole sector—government and non-government. The target was set for the whole sector. This year's reporting was changed to reflect the Office for Disability and Client

Services scope, which is only performance in the non-government sector. So the 935 was government and non-government. We have now changed to non-government only. On page 10.25 you will see the increase in community accommodation and care places for the government sector in a similar table.

Mrs REDMOND: What is the current level of unmet need for community accommodation and care?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The unmet need data as at March 2008 in relation to accommodation and community services depends on the category that one is talking about. There are different levels of need. In relation to supported accommodation there are levels of basic, moderate, high and intensive. In relation to personal support, there is basic, moderate, high and intensive. In relation to community support there is a range of different categories. Community support is a generic name, which includes things such as case management, therapy services, behaviour intervention, counselling, and parents with a disability.

I could provide in more detail a response which categorises those different things, but it depends on the nature of each of those individual services and the category of need. Some services are rated as urgent all the way through to less urgent. The question is a bit unclear. It depends how comprehensive you want the answer.

Mrs REDMOND: I will ask the next question and that will give the basis for a response in due course in terms of getting the information I am after. I understand the department assigns a prioritisation rank and your response indicates that it is basic, moderate, high and intensive. You assign a prioritisation rank to each client based on their level of need. What are the levels of classification and how many people are currently at each level?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I can take the question on notice. I can give you the basic categories. Category 1 is critical—people who are homeless or in immediate danger of homelessness or at risk of causing harm. Category 2 is where there is a risk of those things. Category 3 is where there is deteriorating health or capacity. Category 4 is where it is desirable to enhance the quality of life. So, they are the categories, and we can supply the data concerning those categories.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My question is in relation to the issue of early childhood intervention and therapy services for children with autism spectrum disorder. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.23. Will the minister please advise what funding has been provided by the state government to assist young children with autism?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In 2007-08, an additional \$1 million was provided to expand services for children with autism spectrum disorders, and this funding has been allocated as follows: \$450,000 to Disability SA; \$450,000 to Autism SA; and \$100,000 to the Flinders University Early Childhood Research program. Disability SA's budget for early childhood intervention expenditure for 2007-08 was \$2.1 million, and it is anticipated that 20 per cent of children receiving these services will have autism. This figure does not include the additional funding of \$450,000 received by Disability SA in 2007-08.

Disability SA has expanded services for young children with autism spectrum disorders in country South Australia with six senior developmental programmer positions providing services to young people aged zero to eight years. Five of the six positions have been filled and recruitment of the remaining position is currently being finalised. The positions will focus on structured learning and behavioural management programs for young children, parent education and support to families/carers, interagency collaboration and support for young children with autism and spectrum disorders and their families/carers.

Disability SA has also expanded early childhood intervention and therapy services to young children with autism spectrum disorders aged four to eight years in the metropolitan area. This will increase support for young children and families/carers at the time of transition to school.

Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology has provided intensive training for senior practitioners within Disability SA on the Monash evidence-based parent education and skills training program.

Disability SA also provides a range of developmental and behavioural services and family support packages for school-age children and their families. It is estimated that over 300 children aged zero to eight years will receive services or registration with Disability SA during 2007-08.

During 2008-09, Disability SA will undertake further research and identify evidence-based service delivery and intervention strategies for young children with autism spectrum disorders. A comprehensive service delivery framework for children and young people with autism spectrum disorder within South Australia will be developed. Disability SA, in conjunction with key stakeholders, will work with the federal government regarding the distribution of the autism funding package for young children with autism spectrum disorders.

I note just recently that the commonwealth has announced that all children under the age of six with ASD who are not yet at school will be eligible for up to \$12,000 over two years in essential early intervention support, so that is an incredibly important new initiative. Another component of the package which was announced back in October last year dealing with autism spectrum disorder is that families were able to take up various options of early intervention support including Medicare rebates for diagnosis and referral to allied health professionals and early intervention services.

Another component is six new ASD specific childcare centres, one of which will be located in the northern suburbs in Adelaide. Further details of that program are not yet available but, as soon as they are known, I am sure we will hear further.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.28. Will the minister please advise what the state government is doing to redress the outstanding demand for disability equipment?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am very pleased to say that the extra \$5 million of one-off funding that was provided by the state government as part of the 2008-09 budget process will clear existing waiting lists for equipment for children and adults with disabilities. The extra disability funding will provide more than 1,230 pieces of equipment, such as wheelchairs, walking frames and hoists.

The funding has been allocated to the following agencies: \$2.45 million to Novita Children's Services to provide 620 pieces of equipment to children with disabilities; Julia Farr will receive \$2.15 million to assist Disability SA clients with 540 items of equipment; \$200,000 will go to the Royal Society for the Blind; and \$200,000 to CanDo4Kids for 130 pieces of equipment for children with a hearing impairment.

The \$5 million in extra equipment follows an extra \$5.7 million that was allocated last year. A further \$2 million will be provided in this year's budget to redevelop the hydrotherapy pool complex at Novita's Regency Park centre which is used by almost 200 special students from 16 different public schools across the city.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.25. Will the minister please explain the contribution of the state government to Minda Project 105 and how the project is supporting people with disabilities to live in the community?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Minda Project 105 is a very important project. It provides accommodation in the community for 105 people with disabilities comprising people from the urgent accommodation waiting list and people moving from the Minda campus at Brighton. This is part of the Department for Families and Communities' overall effort in improving community-based accommodation.

In 2005 Minda received \$15.65 million as part of the \$25 million once-off funding provided by DFC to support people with disabilities to live independently in the community. Part of this capital funding for Minda went to the purchase of new community group homes. During 2007-08, Minda has opened five new group homes across Adelaide, at Mitchell Park, Parkholme, Reynella and Blackwood. The completion of these homes signifies part of a long-term partnership between the state and Minda. The aim is to continue to provide community-based living for people who reside at Minda and for those who are on the unmet need accommodation register.

I am pleased to advise that as at May 2008, 57 people have found accommodation in the community as part of Project 105: 35 of those moved from the Minda campus and 22 were referred by Disability SA from the accommodation waiting list. By 1 July 2009, it is anticipated that 12 more people with disabilities will find accommodation through Minda as part of Protection 105.

Further consultation is taking place between the state government and Minda regarding people to be accommodated. There will be a mix between those who reside at Minda and those who are on the waiting list. Development of two remaining blocks at Reynella will commence in late 2008.

Mrs REDMOND: I move to page 10.11 of Volume 3, which is the workforce summary. The current figures show 4,856.5 full-time equivalents for 2007-08 and a slight increase to 4,872.9 as the target for 2008-09. Will the minister advise how many of those people are actually involved in the delivery of disability-related services? I am trying to get a breakdown of how many executives there are as opposed to the number of people on the ground at the coal face.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We can provide that detailed breakdown. There is a myth being perpetrated that somehow this agency is top heavy with executives. We chased that down, and not only are we low by state standards, we are actually low by agency standards. I will provide the member with the details of those in due course, but the essence of it is that we have a very thin executive group running DFC, and Disability Services in particular.

Mrs REDMOND: The minister correctly anticipated where my line of questioning was going on this topic. How does the department respond to independent research suggesting that the department has more than twice the number of executives per capita in WA and Victoria? I advise the minister that on the basis of the 2006 census, which would be the most recent that we can refer to, based on our population and the number of executives in the Department of Health and DFC on \$130,000 per annum or more, that equates to one executive officer for every 17,000 people, roughly.

Victoria, based on the same census, would have one executive officer for every 46,000 (nearly 47,000). So, there are almost three times as many executives per capita here as in Victoria. Western Australia, based on the same census, has a total of 47 executive officers on \$130,000 or more, equating to one executive officer for every 41,682 people. So, the statistics based on that, and the suggestion by Richard Bruggeman in an interview on FIVEaa, is certainly that we are top heavy. How does the department respond to that?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We saw a handwritten note from Richard, which was apparently based on looking at some annual reports and making a few phone calls: I think it might be a little too grand to call it research. Richard raised it with us as a matter of concern and so we looked into it, and it is just not borne out. We are not comparing apples with apples in that analysis. When you do actually compare executives, I am advised that the Victorian position is something like the number of executives as a proportion of the total workforce is 1.31 per cent, whereas in DFC it is .9 per cent in total. That is also low in terms of other state government agencies. So, it actually runs on a very thin administrative base. They are the facts, and they contradict the assertion.

Mrs REDMOND: Will the minister provide a breakdown as to how many people in the department are involved in administration and how many are involved in direct service provision, and will you include the classification: executive, ASO1 or whatever?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.13. Will the minister please advise of progress in relation to the Strathmont Centre Redevelopment and Community Living Project?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the honourable member for her question. I am sure the answer will also be of interest to the member for Torrens. The Strathmont Centre Redevelopment and Community Living Project aims to relocate 150 residents from the Strathmont Centre to community living in purpose-built group homes. As such, this project is a key contributor towards the achievement of South Australia's Strategic Plan target 6.10 to double the number of people with disabilities appropriately housed and supported in community-based accommodation by 2014.

I am pleased to advise that, since the inception of the project, 90 residents have been relocated from the Strathmont Centre into purpose-built accommodation in the community. Between July 2006 to December 2006, a total of six houses were completed, two in each of the suburbs of Northfield, Greenacres and Sturt, which enabled 30 residents to move from the Strathmont Centre. Between January 2007 and March 2007, a total of four houses were completed, two in each of the suburbs of Enfield and Gilles Plains, which enabled 20 residents to move from the Strathmont Centre; and between December 2007 to March 2008, a total of eight houses were completed (40 new group home places), two in each of the suburbs of Seacombe Gardens, Klemzig, Angle Park and Pooraka, which enabled 40 residents to move from the Strathmont Centre.

In February 2008, work commenced on a further five houses, two each at Salisbury North and Park Holme, and one at Clovelly Park. These houses are due for completion between October and December 2008. A further five land allotments have been confirmed for houses to be built, two in each of the suburbs of Campbelltown and Broadview, and one at Findon. Work is underway on the business case for stage 2 of the project, which will see the remaining 99 Strathmont residents return to community living and the Strathmont Centre eventually vacated. The business case is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

In 2007-08, the Strathmont Centre current and recurrent budgets remain within budget. A further 60 residents will be relocated to supported accommodation by June 2009. Ten purpose-built group homes will be used for that purpose. It is worth saying that I have visited some of these group homes and, without question, the residents report a massive improvement in their wellbeing. Often their health improves.

You can see by the suburbs listed that in some cases they are able to live closer to family and friends, which is an enormous benefit. These houses become places which are easier to visit and, as they are homes, family members spend more time there because they are homes. It is a fantastic project that we are going to press on. Of course, nobody will be forced to move but, over time, as more people see how their friends have fared, they are very keen to get into these houses.

Ms BREUER: As a supplementary question: are there any proposals for country residents?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There are no real institutions in the country, but certainly the idea of group homes in the country is an important matter. Of course, in the past, if there was a child with a disability in a family, they were sent down to the city, so the problem is even greater there. Part of that process of putting group homes in country areas is to ensure that children do not have to leave their communities to come into the city to get the service, so that will be part of our community home program.

Ms BREUER: That is very good to hear, minister. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.25 regarding younger people in residential aged care. Will the minister please explain what the state government is doing to prevent younger people with disabilities being admitted to residential aged care facilities?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a particular issue in country areas where there are fewer options for young people. In February 2006, the Council of Australian Governments announced a national health reform package for every state and territory with a focus to reduce the number of young people within residential aged care facilities. South Australia committed to a bilateral agreement signed in July 2006. Under these arrangements, total funding of \$18.7 million for five years has been committed to the Young People in Nursing Homes project. This comprises \$9.5 million from the state government and \$9.2 million from the commonwealth.

In 2006-07, a total of \$1.9 million was allocated to this program focusing on people with disability under 50 years of age—\$1.6 million from the state and \$0.3 million from the commonwealth. This assisted 10 people to move from nursing homes to supported accommodation, six people to be diverted from entering a nursing home into supported community accommodation options, and seven people who chose to stay in a nursing home to receive a lifestyle enhancement package.

It is the case that, especially in country areas, because there are no other options, there is a trade-off between having a young person in a nursing home and their having to leave their community. So, making sure that they actually get a package of support means they do not necessarily have to socialise with a whole lot of older people so that they can actually get out and have a much better quality of life, and it is another way of dealing with this issue.

In 2007-08, funding increased to a total of \$2.7 million with \$1.6 million from the state government and \$1.1 million from the commonwealth. I am pleased to advise that as at May 2008, this has increased assistance to people with a disability as follows:

- 15 people have moved from nursing homes to supported accommodation in the community;
- 14 people have been diverted from entering a nursing home; and
- 10 people chose to receive a lifestyle enhancement package.

In 2008-09, we are targeting 24 people to move from nursing homes, 19 to be diverted and 16 to receive lifestyle enhancement packages. South Australia, across the nation, is performing better than average in terms of keeping young people out of nursing homes.

Ms BREUER: My last question is about the emergency card. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.13. I note that one of the department's targets for 2008-09 is to implement service approaches which offer people with a disability the opportunity for choice, control, independence and inclusion. Can the minister advise how Disability SA's emergency card is helping people with a disability in this regard?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Disability SA emergency card is designed to make it easier for a person with a disability to identify themselves when they need health care. Sometimes when a person presents for health treatment, their symptoms may not immediately be identified as a disability. Due to the nature of the disability, someone might assume that because their speech is affected, for instance, they might be affected by drugs or alcohol.

This can be very distressing for a person, as you can imagine. If the disability or the symptoms they are experiencing means they are unable to communicate, it can be difficult for health care professionals to gain the information they need.

The emergency card is small enough to be carried in a wallet or purse and is being made available to all clients of Disability SA. It contains after hours contact details for Disability SA, and we hope that the cards will make a difference for people with a disability, their carers and the health professionals treating them. We know that hospitals have ongoing issues in easily identifying people with disabilities in hospitals. Knowing immediately that a person is a client of Disability SA means that people will know who to call for information that is relevant to the person's circumstances.

We are also hopeful that this will improve communication between Disability SA and emergency services by displaying an after hours number so that the person's details can be accessed at all times. This will cut the time spent by hospitals researching a patient's history. The use of the card will also improve discharge planning to enable people with disabilities to be better linked to the community services that they need upon discharge.

A closer relationship between hospitals and Disability SA will also cut any doubling up of service provision. Hospital staff will know Disability SA has a service agreement in place for the person being discharged so that they do not need to form another one.

The privacy of the person with a disability is protected as they make the decision to identify themselves as a client of Disability SA and for hospital staff to have access to that information. The idea came from people with a disability themselves and Disability SA brought it to fruition. I congratulate all those who have come up with this simple but very useful idea.

Mrs REDMOND: I also refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.13: Targets 2008-09, Objective 3. The fourth dot point states:

Implement service approaches which offer people with a disability the opportunity for choice, control, independence and inclusion

Is this a reference to self-managed funding and, if so, why wasn't that term used?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is self-managed funding but it is also more than that. As I said before, we are expecting a report from the Ministerial Advisory Council concerning the self-managed proposition, and significant research has been undertaken into the benefits and risks of self-managed funding.

It is increasingly recognised around the world as a means of enabling independence, inclusion, control and choice for people with disabilities, and is a system in which people with disabilities who are eligible to receive funding have the option of controlling decision-making. The critical thing about this is that it is not compulsory; people can remain in the existing service system, and many would choose to do so.

The major benefits include choice and the ability to design a flexible system to suit their needs. So, it is not a complete answer to choice and having a citizen-centric approach to providing services to just say that we are going to do self-managed support; we also need to build in our own service system, realising that a single government service for people with disabilities actually enables a much greater level of accountability in disability. Disability SA has actually comprised this single point of contact for disability services, and it is the single assessment and allocation process

that has come through those reforms that will enable us to meet the individual needs of people with disabilities.

So, there are two things: there is the new agenda, which has not yet been finalised, and it is also what we are doing to our existing service system to make that much more individualised and choice based.

Mrs REDMOND: Again on the issue of individualised funding, does the government anticipate any expenditure in relation to self-managed funding in the 2008-09 financial year?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Apart from the support we provide for the advisory body to carry out its work in terms of providing us with support. The nature of self-managed support is to take the existing envelope of funding but apply it in a different way; it does not, of itself, have any implications in terms of the absolute level of funding. It is how that funding is administered, whether by the agency on behalf of a person with a disability or by the person with the disability themselves. The truth is that there are already some self-managed funding packages, and certain individuals use them, but it has not been a widespread policy choice by the South Australian government.

It has been adopted in a very substantial way in regions in the United Kingdom, and there are some Australian jurisdictions that have chosen to go down that path to a greater degree—and Victoria has gone down this path to a greater degree than some of the other jurisdictions. So, we are looking at those carefully to determine the risks and opportunities for us.

Mrs REDMOND: Moving on to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.23, Performance Indicators, and the second dot point, Community Accommodation and Care. In the past year have NGOs outside the metropolitan area been advised that clients will be placed by priority rather than place of residence?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Could you clarify that for me?

Mrs REDMOND: A concern has been expressed that certain NGOs in the rural sector have been advised that if, for instance, they are running an accommodation provision, rather than them being free to select the people they think appropriate from their local community, I understand they have been advised by the department that the placement will be made according to the priority of the individual, rather than the area of residence.

That could result in people being shifted from their own communities into other communities and the NGOs, in turn, being forced to accept people who have come in from outside rather than placing local people.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not think that amounts to a change. I think, in regions, it has always been a combination of factors that determine how vacancies are dealt with in existing services—obviously the extent of a person's need and their geographical location, all those factors, would be taken into account. We do not think that amounts to a difference in approach under the Disability SA system, given that those providers would always have been provided with funding from what would have been the predecessor of Disability SA.

Mrs REDMOND: Could I ask the minister to provide an indication of how many clients from metropolitan Adelaide, for instance, have been placed outside the metropolitan area and how many from outside have been placed within the metropolitan area? I know he may have to take this on notice.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will provide an answer, but I will have to take it on notice.

Mrs REDMOND: The last question I want to ask relates to a comment to the minister made in his opening statement. I did not quite catch the number, although I thought the minister mentioned 495 respite places. What is included as a respite place in that count? Is that for one person to have regular respite or is it for a day, a week, a month? Whatever number it was, what is meant by respite places?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It was 1,295. It amounts to the total number of people who can get respite packages, but the actual types of respite package are many and varied and depend on the needs of the particular person. It is everything from very substantial support to perhaps somewhat less substantial support.

Mrs REDMOND: Do I take it that it is 1,295 people?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

The CHAIR: We will now proceed to the examination of the Minister for Housing.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr P. Smith, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms. H. Fulcher, Executive Director, Housing Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr G. Storkey, Chief Executive Officer, HomeStart Finance, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms S. Barr, Manager, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr G. Myers, Coordinator Strategic Projects, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr P. Fagan-Schmidt, General Manager, Affordable Housing and Sector Development, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr D. Huxley, Director, Corporate Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms M. Curran, General Manager, Asset Services, Department for Families and Communities.

The CHAIR: Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do. Housing affordability and providing access to long-term housing outcomes is a key challenge for all governments, but one for which the previous commonwealth government provided little support. In fact, in recent years there has been limited engagement by the commonwealth on the development of housing policy and programs, with commonwealth and state initiatives kept separate and unconnected.

The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, the major instrument for housing government funding in Australia, is predominantly focused on the very important issue of social housing, but provides limited opportunities for addressing housing outcomes outside of this tenure. In the past there have been few opportunities to coordinate national policy on regional and urban planning to oversee the type and level of growth of housing across the nation.

With the election of the Rudd Labor government, we have welcomed in a new era of housing policy—a new era of cooperation and a strong resolve to create a robust national housing system. Now for the first time in many years we have a commonwealth government working with us to tackle the very important issue of housing affordability. Tanya Plibersek, the federal housing minister, is working hard to create a new Affordable Housing Policy and Funding Agreement. This work will tackle important issues such as dampening the long-term trend of rising land and house prices, the continued need for direct government financial assistance, the need for a substantial private investment to increase affordable housing supply, and the imperative to secure the viability of the social housing system.

The South Australian government is working closely with the commonwealth government to develop strategies to tackle these issues. Several of the major issues currently being addressed include: the \$500 million Housing Affordability Fund to streamline the approval processes for building, reducing infrastructure charges and development costs; a national rental affordability scheme, which aims at increasing the supply of affordable rental accommodation; building 600 new houses and units for homeless people across Australia; a plan for an audit of commonwealth, state and territory land for possible release for housing development; the development of a new national housing policy; and state and territory participation in the work of the commonwealth's New Housing Supply Research Council, which will coordinate research activity and report on the adequacy of construction and land supply for the next 20 years. We know that there is still much more work to be done and we will continue to work very closely with the commonwealth to address these issues.

In relation to affordable housing, approximately 370 new affordable rental dwellings for low to moderate income households have been generated since we established the Affordable Housing

Innovations Fund (AHIF) in September 2005. The government's financial contribution of \$14 million has generated 141 properties valued at \$28 million. We have achieved the sale of 385 public housing dwellings under the Affordable Housing Program, maximising sales to public and community housing tenants and other low to moderate income earners.

In relation to urban renewal, we have commenced the first stage of the Housing SA Peachey Belt redevelopment component of the Playford Alive Project, including the relocation of Housing SA customers and the demolition of public housing to create land for development. We have commenced the Elizabeth Park Neighbourhood Renewal Project and expanded the successful Private Rental Liaison Project, with a new liaison officer appointed in the South-East at the Limestone Coast Housing SA office. We have also provided bond assistance and advance and arrears rental payments to over 13,000 low income South Australian's to assist them to secure and retain their private rental housing.

In relation to home ownership, we have provided affordable home ownership options for South Australians through a variety of HomeStart Finance products, such as Equity Start, Advantage, Nunga and new Breakthrough Loans, with over 600 loan settlements for the 2007-08 financial year. We have implemented a new model in relation to high needs housing for Housing SA Services. The new model has realigned Housing SA Services to deliver outcomes to customers across a range of housing options, including emergency and crisis accommodation, private and social rental, links to support, and home ownership information and referrals.

We have allocated public housing to over 2,000 high needs customers; constructed over 300 new public Aboriginal and community housing properties in suitable locations; and implemented a number of mental health packages and related programs and services, including a memorandum of understanding with Mental Health Services, designed to support Housing SA customers with mental health issues. We have developed and implemented new disruptive behaviour policy and procedures, which clearly commit Housing SA to utilise a range of early intervention and prevention strategies to assist tenants to successfully maintain their tenancy and also to maintain harmony within our Housing SA neighbourhoods. We have developed and strengthened links with aged care services in the community through community care consultants. We have increased the number of properties allocated to the Disability Housing Program, and we have progressed the redevelopment of Afton House.

I also want to make a few brief remarks about homelessness. Over 16,000 people have been assisted by social inclusion initiatives that prevent homelessness among at-risk groups and assist people out of homelessness, such as the Supported Tenancies Program, the Boarding House and Caravan Park Outreach Service, Private Rental Liaison Officer Program and transitional accommodation facilities for indigenous people in Port Augusta and Ceduna.

We have recorded a decrease in the number of people in the inner-city homelessness count from 362 in August 2007 to 342 in May 2008. There was also a decrease in the number of people sleeping rough to 79 down from 94 in 2007. We completed the Franklin Street Bus Station complex in November 2007 for homeless and low income earners through Common Ground. We expanded the Street to Home Service to cover the wider metropolitan area, and we have developed a model for a Foyer youth accommodation service and a regional Common Ground service to be located in Port Augusta.

Membership:

Mr Pengilly substituted for Mrs Redmond.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.13: 2007-08 Highlights, Objective 1: Affordable housing choices and communities that prosper, and Objective 2: High need housing. There have been some high profile cases, including one with a significant number of children, of overcrowding in one of the Housing Trust properties. Do you have an overcrowding policy and, if so, what is it?

The CHAIR: That is not based on a specific line. It is a general question, so the minister may or may not care to answer that.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I happy to address the question of overcrowding. Housing SA uses generic occupancy standards to match each tenant's household to housing with an appropriate number of bedrooms. The occupancy standards obviously seek to minimise under-occupancy and overcrowding where possible. Generally, the standards provide that parents are not

required to share a bedroom with a child or children—parents would be eligible for a separate bedroom. Children of different genders are not required to share a bedroom once a child reaches the age of five, and children are eligible for a separate bedroom where the age gap is seven years or greater regardless of the gender of the children.

The application of this occupancy standard is affected by the availability of housing stock with a sufficient number of bedrooms. Housing SA has a limited number of properties with four or more bedrooms. Where very large families present for assistance, the standard would invariably need to be overwritten by the interests of providing shelter for those households. It is likely that such families will have also experienced a lot of difficulty in obtaining affordable private rental accommodation because of the very same issues.

Proportionately, the number of Aboriginal people who live in overcrowded conditions is high compared with non-Aboriginal people in South Australia, and that difference is also reflected across Housing SA tenancies. For cultural reasons, Aboriginal people are often more mobile and likely to share homes. Sharing with visiting relations is common amongst Aboriginal people, and these factors often lead to overcrowded situations. Overcrowding in the Aboriginal communities is recognised through a specific target in the South Australian Strategic Plan. Under this target, the government aims to reduce overcrowding in Aboriginal households by 10 per cent by 2014. So, this particular issue has recently been specifically recognised by that new target.

At the end of May 2008, the average occupancy level across all public rental housing stock types was 1.74 persons per dwelling and 2.65 persons per dwelling across Aboriginal rental accommodation. At that time, there were 129 Aboriginal households—about 7.1 per cent of all Aboriginal rental housing stock—with six or more persons occupying Aboriginal rental housing, and 655 households with six or more persons living in public rental housing. DFC has established a baseline number for overcrowded Aboriginal households across all tenures in South Australia as at 30 June 2001—that is, 690—using census data from that year. In establishing this measure, households requiring two or more additional bedrooms were considered to be living in overcrowded conditions.

As at June 2001, the baseline number, 2,010 households, or approximately 30 per cent, are considered to be living in mainstream public housing or state-owned managed indigenous housing, so that could include remote regions of South Australia where this issue is particularly acute, especially in the APY lands. Proportional annual targets of 1 per cent reduction have been established to achieve the South Australian Strategic Plan target of that 10 per cent reduction.

Ms CHAPMAN: The opposition has been informed of two cases in the last few days of serious overcrowding and resultant damage and trashing of the houses occupied. We are informed that both these properties have been brought to the department's attention. I will give a summary of the two that we know about.

In one case, three years ago, we were advised that a male person with his two teenage daughters occupied a Housing Trust property at Mansfield Park. Two other adults, a son and his girlfriend, moved in. The teenage girls were then sleeping in their father's room. The local advisory board brought this problem to the board and the local regional officers at Families SA. They subsequently had a meeting with the operational policy advisory committee and were informed that there was no policy in relation to overcrowding, and there was not going to be one. They met with members of the board and the minister and the overcrowding policy was among topics discussed, including property condition, disruptive tenants and mandatory payment of rent. They were informed that Housing SA had no intention of creating an overcrowding policy because people 'doubling up', to use their words, helped reduce the numbers on their lists and they were quite prepared to forgo the lost rent.

Today we were advised of another family which was six months in a three bedroom house. There were nine occupants. They were ultimately moved, but not after a mountain of mouse-infested trash, old car tyres and the like were removed. It appears these matters are being brought to your personal attention, minister, and/or your department's attention, and, clearly, left for months on end.

The CHAIR: Order! I believe the deputy leader is well aware that that question was totally out of order. However, the minister may respond if he cares to do so.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It would be helpful if the deputy leader could make some modest attempt to relate it to the estimates process. However, for the interest of the committee, I am happy to provide the following details.

By signing a conditions of tenancy agreement, tenants agree to keep the premises and any surrounding area in clean, good, tenable condition. That is an obligation they sign up to. Where this does not occur—where it has been determined there is damage which is other than as a result of fair wear and tear—the tenant is advised, and he or she is responsible for the cost of repairing the damage. The tenant is given the opportunity to rectify or make good by cleaning up. Where they choose to do this, they are given 14 days, or some other nominated period. Following this, an inspection is carried out to determine if the tenant has complied. If the tenant has not complied, they are sent a further 48 hours' written notice that contractors will be in contact with the tenant to carry out the works and all the costs will be charged to the tenant.

Where the customer is experiencing difficulty in maintaining their property, Housing SA may agree to undertake the required work and then charge the tenant for this service. Housing SA often refers customers to a local government or community agency that provides low cost basic home maintenance services or community-based assistance that can provide them with the support they need. Property condition can sometimes be affected by mental health issues, such as hoarding. Housing SA works closely with Mental Health Services to support and ensure the safety of customers who have been identified as demonstrating hoarding tendencies.

As part of Housing SA's probationary tenancy program, property condition is one of the several key aspects considered by housing officers prior to conversion of a probationary tenancy to a standard tenancy. Complaints about disruption quite often have elements of property condition attached to them. As part of the investigation of disruptive tenancy issues, property condition responsibilities are raised with tenants. Ad hoc complaints on property condition are investigated by housing officers promptly. In addition, while in the community as part of general Housing SA business, housing officers routinely check and investigate the condition of Housing SA properties.

Ms CHAPMAN: The regional advisory boards in Adelaide, Marion, Gawler, Elizabeth, Parks and Modbury are all having their funding cut as of today. Why is that?

The CHAIR: That question was not in order. No reference was provided. The deputy leader has been warned. The member for Bright.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.58. Will the minister explain how the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund is contributing to the availability of affordable housing for those most in need in our community?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the honourable member for this question and her interest in affordable housing in her part of Adelaide. The Affordable Housing Innovations Fund has been successful in generating partnerships where the project partner brings a contribution of land or capital which then enables private sector borrowing. The Affordable Housing Innovations Fund then contributes additional capital. This approach has been successful in generating twice the number of housing outcomes that traditional public housing investment is able to generate.

Our target is to develop 200 affordable rental homes per annum between 2006 and 2009. In the current financial year alone, government has committed \$14 million which has attracted an additional \$14 million in partnership funds. As a result, 141 new properties are now being developed. These projects are developed in partnership with community organisations that responded to the invitation to partner with government to develop affordable rental projects. The total commitment made by the fund since it was established is \$49.5 million.

Over 60 per cent of capital projects are located within the metropolitan area, 20 per cent are in the inner city and 18 per cent are in regional areas. All housing generated as a result of these partnerships is characterised by rent levels which are set at 75 per cent of market rents and have a ceiling rent of no more than 30 per cent of the household's income. That means that rents are affordable, and each housing outcome makes a direct contribution to reducing housing stress in our community. The houses will remain affordable over the long term. Grant funding being approved through the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund is specifically targeted at organisations that house low to moderate income singles, couples and families. Partnerships have been established with not-for-profit organisations that have a sound track record in providing housing and accommodation services. Biennial calls for expressions of interest in partnering with government are attracting response from a range of organisations, including aged-care providers, disability organisations, community housing associations, local government and welfare agencies.

The projects are consequently providing houses for a range of needs groups within our community, including older people, people with disabilities, inner city homeless people, refugees, older women, low income workers and low income families.

While almost 80 per cent of the expenditure from the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund has been directed at rental partnership properties, a further \$5 million has been earmarked for partnership projects for the development of affordable rental and home purchase housing for indigenous households.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.13. Could the minister advise the status of the residential component of the Franklin Street Bus Station development (which he mentioned earlier) and outline how the Common Ground model is being expanded as part of the government's strategy to increase the supply of affordable housing?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Adelaide City Council has developed a 39-unit residential component within the Franklin Street Bus Station redevelopment, which was made possible by the state government's contribution of \$6.4 million in capital grants to Common Ground to enable it to acquire all 39 units. Two units are currently designated for service functions and 33 are occupied. The remaining four are to be allocated following completion of some bathroom repairs as a result of water damage.

This is the second Common Ground initiative to be committed in the City of Adelaide. The other Common Ground initiative involves an Affordable Housing Innovations Fund grant of \$5 million towards the purchase and refurbishment of a property at Light Square. This \$8 million project, once completed, will be the service base for Common Ground, as well as providing 60 units of accommodation for people who are homeless and for those on low incomes. The Light Square project is expected to be completed in mid-2009.

On 21 May 2008 the Port Augusta Regional Common Ground project was announced by the Premier and will be developed by Common Ground Adelaide. The Port Augusta project involves a two-stage capital development of 40 residential units at an estimated total cost of \$5.6 million. Some 20 renovated units will provide affordable accommodation for low income people and 20 new units will house the formerly homeless.

Ms FOX: My question is in relation to Program 1: Affordable Housing Choices and Communities That Prosper. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.58. Could the minister say how successful Housing SA has been in reducing the level of customer debt?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It has been a substantial exercise to get this debt down. From July 2007 Housing SA became legally responsible for the collection of debts owed by customers of the former Aboriginal housing authority. At the end of May 2008 debts owed by customers of the Aboriginal housing program totalled \$3.59 million compared with \$4.03 million at the beginning of July 2007 when Housing SA became responsible for collection and follow-up.

At the end of May 2008 Housing SA had reduced the level of public housing customer debt by \$3.48 million (24.5 per cent) to \$10.72 million. Housing SA's total level of customer debt for both public and Aboriginal customers totalled \$14.32 million. Housing SA seeks to work with customers to reinforce their responsibilities to repay their rent and other debts promptly or, if unable to do so, make repayment arrangements before the debt becomes overdue and unmanageable.

Where serious tenancy issues are identified during the follow-up processes, customers are referred to support services, including financial counselling. Housing SA has the capacity to take legal action against those tenants who refuse to address their debts or continue to break repayment arrangements.

Housing SA has noted that the introduction of the new customer debt management policy in 2005 has had a substantial and positive impact on the level of unpaid debt. The major changes to the arrangement include:

- A new affordable repayment schedule based on 30 to 35 per cent of household income.
- Computerised (specific) time frames for follow-up action.
- Reinforcement of limits on broken arrangements before legal action commences.
- Regular review of arrangements less than the repayment schedule or that take longer than two years to repay.
- A new clause in the Conditions of Tenancy that require tenants on Centrelink income to pay rent or debt repayments by direct deduction from their Centrelink payments.
- Where an applicant has a Housing SA debt, access to housing is linked to the applicant's repayment history.

Due to early intervention, Housing SA staff are now addressing debt issues at a more manageable level for customers, thereby enabling customers to repay smaller debts and avoid the possibility of legal action. The individual debt level for customers has reduced substantially.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.18. Minister, you mentioned the introduction of the new regime for disruptive tenants which started in February this year and which enables the department to go to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal and to have some level of accountability as an owner of property from which the department was otherwise exempt. How many applications have been made to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal since the introduction of the new policy? How many orders have been issued for the removal of tenants by the tribunal?

The CHAIR: That is not based on a specific line, but I will see whether the minister has an answer.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister referred to it in his opening statement by saying how successful it is.

The CHAIR: We still need a specific line. I am sure there is one there.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Perhaps we can refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.55.

The CHAIR: There we go.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am happy to answer that question. The important thing about disruptive behaviour is not necessarily that we achieve eviction but, rather, stop the behaviour. One of the key elements of the new team is that they get in first to stop the behaviour—obviously under pain of eviction. I will give an idea of evictions due to disruption. There were 38 in 2006-07 and 19 in this financial year as to March 2008.

Ms CHAPMAN: So that is after the introduction of the new policy.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The new policy is being rolled out. Where it fits into that part of the financial year, it is difficult to compartmentalise it. They are the running figures for the year to date.

Ms CHAPMAN: Referring to Budget Paper 3, page 2.29, in relation to 'Savings initiative: Housing—reduction in grants to SAHT' totalling \$23 million, is this a result of the government's initiative to sell off the 8,000 Housing Trust homes and reduce the overall stock; and, if there are alternative affordable accommodation dwellings proposed, could you please identify the number of dwellings actually built that were available for occupation in the 2007-08 year and expected in the 2008-09 period?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The answer to the first part of the question is no. In relation to the number of homes to be built, I will come back to the member with an answer.

Ms CHAPMAN: And that have been built.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: In relation to high-needs housing for mental health, it is claimed that 50 per cent of patients who are still in hospital are there because there is inadequate accommodation support. My question is: how many dwellings—units, houses or otherwise—are proposed to be built or are budgeted for in the 2008-09 year for mental health occupancy?

The CHAIR: That may not be in this budget area. Is that for the minister for mental health?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That does not fit in my area of responsibility. What I can say in general terms, though, is that the challenge is not the houses in this area: it is the recurrent support services that go with the houses. That is the critical thing that enables people to provide the places. We provide a modest program of disability support for people with psychiatric disabilities who may also have some other form of disability but, primarily, the challenge is not building the number of houses—it is about getting the appropriate level of services to support people in those houses.

Within Housing SA, we have a memorandum of understanding that has been developed between Housing SA and Mental Health Services as a means of coordinating delivery of mental health services, psychiatric disability support and general housing services, and that MOU operates within existing agency budgets. There are 12 supported accommodation demonstration projects currently operating across South Australia to provide integrated accommodation with clinical and

non-clinical support. They primarily are supervised out of the area of mental health within minister Gago's portfolio and in partnership with our organisation.

During 2006-07, 88 social housing customers were assisted through those projects. These projects involve the provision of planned support services through formal partnership arrangements between government and non-government organisations, and regional mental health services and public housing providers work together on those. I suppose the only other area that may have some bearing on your question is the Street to Home initiative developed by the Department of Health and the Department for Families and Communities under the social inclusion initiative which seeks to provide stable housing for chronically homeless people who often have psychiatric disabilities.

Since 1 July 2007, 55 Street to Home clients have been secured long-term housing with Housing SA and a range of support services have been implemented to address issues contributing to homelessness which are often multifactorial. They will include mental health, drug and alcohol dependence and unemployment. Housing SA, through community housing, will also provide housing to people with mental illnesses. Some community housing associations specialise in this sort of thing. Also, through the Return to Home project, Housing SA provides a staff member to conduct a housing needs assessment as part of an outreach service.

We have, of course, our general high-needs housing program, which may include people with a psychiatric disability. The 424 newly-constructed dwellings which are targets for 2008-09 will include people targeted for categories 1 and 2 public housing tenants, and a number of those will fit within that. They will include things like the Afton House boarding house redevelopment which is forecast for completion later this year and also a range of other projects.

Ms CHAPMAN: Referring to page 10.55, what is the budget for the installation of water meters in Housing Trust properties with shared meters in the 2008-09 year?

The CHAIR: I did not catch the page reference.

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 10.55.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, I hope you can see that the minister is perfectly capable of answering any question you throw at him, but it is much easier when the reference is available, besides which it conforms with parliamentary procedure.

Ms CHAPMAN: I think he knows what it is, Madam Chair, because he is looking at it.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is within the capital works budget. First, of course, we need to establish which of the properties are suitable. We are making estimates at the moment based on the fact that we need to carry out surveys of a number of these properties. We think that there may be 2,000 to 3,000 individual meters affected and installed this year (the 2008-09 year) which may cost in the order of \$1 million, but that does not include recurrent expenditure associated with the reading of the meters.

Ms CHAPMAN: It is expected that there will be a saving of \$3 million a year as a result of tenants paying for their own water. How much, in your understanding, would Housing SA pay for water to these properties if it were not transferring that cost to the tenant?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This question proceeds from a bit of a misapprehension, because the reality is that everyone pays for water at the moment. The people in their own houses pay for water, private landlords pay for water, people in public housing pay for water if they have their own tenancy.

The group that has not paid for water in the past has been this group of people who have been on shared water meters. The costs that SA Water charge the government (Housing SA), have recently increased and are foreshadowed to continue to increase. I think that that has been the impetus, on the back of a new push for adequately pricing water to reflect its scarcity, for there being an increase in the cost of water, and it is now regarded as inappropriate that there are some people who do not pay for water.

The question really became not so much whether people should pay for water, which I think generally everybody accepts, but rather how it should happen. The 18,000-odd people who are on shared water meters presented a particular issue because they do not have individualised water meters, so counting the amount of water they used was an issue. We considered the ways in which we could do that. We considered installing an individual water meter, but SA Water charges an amount of money for the installation of an individual water meter which would most likely eclipse the actual cost of the yearly provision of water.

The annual supply charge from SA Water, which I think is of the order of \$157, on our estimates of what this charge is likely to be for each individual person on these shared water meters, in many cases would well exceed \$157. So, we would have this absurd situation where we would be paying more to put in the water meters than would be the yearly charge.

It was suggested to us that there is a cheaper way of doing this by having individual water meters which are not SA Water meters. There are some complexities around that, and even the installer of that service acknowledges that that may not be suitable for all properties. So, we are considering how we go about that and we are essentially surveying properties now. We are starting with those properties where there is likely to be the largest difference in the water usage because of the different sized properties, and trying to see whether individual water meters will work there.

As an acknowledgement that this is obviously not as precise as having an individual water meter, what we have chosen to do is to take the first 30 per cent off the amount that would be charged to those group of properties and pay it ourselves, so that that would have the greatest chance of ensuring that nobody was paying for water that they were not using, and that is the approach that we have taken. For some people though we will obviously want to move towards the individual water meters, and that is the approach that we are taking. We are, at the moment, visiting people and assessing properties for changes to introduce the individual water meters.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a point of clarification on that. I am not sure whether I missed that, as it was a very long answer, but will there be a saving of \$3 million this year, or did the minister not answer that part of the question?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We are not saving anything. The money is being paid. SA Water are charging increased fees. We have been bearing these costs, at least for shared water meter tenants, for a very long period of time, and those charges are increasing. I think this regularises the situation where now everybody in South Australia has to pay for their water. So, this would be no different from the situation that occurs for other people that use water.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate that it is no different. My question though is: if the department was paying it this year, how much would it be paying?

The CHAIR: Member for Bragg, do you have a reference for that?

Ms CHAPMAN: That is what we are informed and it is what I am putting to the minister. I asked the minister: what were the savings?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take that question on notice.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 1, page 19; Budget Paper 2, page 6; Budget Paper 3, pages 2.4, 2.28 and 2.43; and Budget Paper 4—

The CHAIR: This is sounding a bit general; I hope you have a specific question.

Ms BREUER: —I have—Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, pages 10.13 and 10.55. Will the minister please advise of the development of a new Foyer model for South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the honourable member for her question. The Foyer model's historical roots are in France. The Foyer model began, I think, as a scheme for young people who were moving back to the country and did not have accommodation. The essence of the Foyer model is the link between the tenancy and an obligation to engage in some form of training and employment development. It has now been modified and directed at homeless youth, and it is in that form that we pick it up and try to apply it to South Australia.

This government has had a commitment to halving the number of people sleeping rough by 2010, and there is a growing appreciation of the difficulties of youth homelessness. South Australia has the first Foyer project in Australia. The Prime Minister was recently in Adelaide to launch the commonwealth's green paper on homelessness. This green paper, the first one ever on homelessness, provides options for the way forward, options which are, in part, based on the excellent work being done in South Australia.

The green paper is the starting point for a national approach in relation to addressing homelessness. The key theme in that paper is housing first: the idea that getting people into long-term accommodation and supporting them there should be the aim of all homelessness strategies. It sounds simple but merely providing services to people while they are homeless that is not directed at the end point of stable accommodation proved to be unsuccessful.

South Australia has been developing this approach as a key platform in reducing homelessness. In fact, our efforts have been so successful that South Australia has been the only

state to report a decrease in the number of people sleeping rough compared with the 19 per cent average national increase. As a first step towards addressing homelessness, the commonwealth recently announced 'A place to call home' funding, a commitment of \$150 million to establish 600 long-term housing options across the country for people who are homeless. Under this program more than \$11 million has been committed to South Australian projects, as we have moved very quickly to gain access to that federal funding. One of the initiatives funded under the program is the Foyer Plus project. This project will deliver 40 apartments to young single people and young families in one and two-bedroom units. Supports will be put in place to ensure that these young people are linked into a range of services including education, training and employment.

The investment into Foyer Plus will be \$9.5 million with shared responsibility between the state and commonwealth governments. Importantly, this project also partners with private industry and business. The AFL is a key partner in the Foyer Plus development and, as part of the AFL's commitment, tenants will be connected with community groups and business to engage young people into broader opportunities including life coaching, training and employment as well as social, sporting and cultural activities.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.55 and 10.56. Will the minister please advise the outcomes of the significant reform process undertaken across the social housing sector in South Australia and, in particular, the outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged members of our community?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The government embarked on a major reform of South Australia's social housing system. These reforms culminated in the passing of the affordable housing act last year. In particular, this legislation paved the way for Housing SA to:

- focus strongly on the provision of affordable housing by recognising it as a key objective of the Development Act;
- enable community sector partnerships and procurement flexibility for the delivery of more affordable housing outcomes; and
- restructure the housing agencies into one organisation in line with a new service delivery model.

Housing SA now offers the full continuum of housing options and coordinates effective packages of support for Housing SA customers with high needs. The new service delivery model assists Housing SA in its contribution to the achievement of a number of South Australia's Strategic Plan targets to:

- halve the number of rough sleepers by 2010 (to be maintained thereafter);
- increase affordable home purchase and rental opportunities;
- halve the number of South Australians experiencing housing stress by 2014;
- reduce overcrowding in Aboriginal households by 10 per cent by 2014; and
- double the number of people with disabilities appropriately housed and supported in community-based accommodation by 2014.

Housing reform has also improved access for Aboriginal people to housing and housing services. There has been a real increase in the number of positive housing outcomes for Aboriginal families; an additional 40 households have been assisted into long-term public housing compared to the same period prior to the housing reform. These outcomes reflect Housing SA's commitment to improve access to housing services for Aboriginal people through the establishment of an Aboriginal specialist housing officer group within Housing SA's regional services.

Housing reform and the new governance structures also position South Australia well for implementing a number of national housing initiatives. We have had significant input into the shaping of these initiatives and now we are well placed to gain the benefits of being an early mover on those initiatives. They are:

- the \$500 million Housing Affordability Fund, with the goal of streamlining development approval processes and reducing infrastructure charges and development costs;
- the National Rental Affordability Scheme to address rental affordability through increasing supply;
- building new accommodation options for people who are homeless;

- an audit of government-owned land for possible release for housing development; and
- the new National Housing Supply Research Council to coordinate housing research and report on the adequacy of construction and land supply for the next 20 years.

Ms BREUER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.55. Will the minister please advise of the changes being proposed for Playford North and what some of the benefits to the community will be?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The Playford North Urban Renewal Project is a massive and important project for the state. It demonstrates a major government commitment to regenerating our northern suburbs. Not only will this project change the physical landscape, but also it will develop community and deliver on a range of whole-of-government and community outcomes.

This project is a good example of developing positive outcomes through local partnerships. The state government, the City of Playford and Playford community are all working together to renew and invigorate the northern area. The project covers about 930 hectares of land, encompassing the suburbs of Davoren Park, Smithfield Plains, Munno Para West and Andrews Farm South. Since the launch of the project, a community master plan has been developed, with the plan considering the three major elements to ensuring good community regeneration outcomes. These elements are community services, economic development and community development.

This project is being informed through the Community Reference Group, which is a group of residents and other local stakeholders who provide advice and input on the development and implementation of this project. This is one of the several key processes the government is using to engage the local community. The Playford North Urban Renewal Project has begun to deliver on its urban renewal commitments. In a short time since this project was announced, new housing has been developed, assets upgraded to improve amenity for public housing tenants, and there have been improved shopping facilities, transport improvements, and sporting and recreational facilities. In addition, new and renewed public space has been constructed. This is the beginning of a long-term, 15-year project and a clear demonstration of this government's commitment to the northern suburbs.

Housing SA is playing a fundamental role in the renewal of Playford and expects to expend \$150 million over the next 15 years to create new housing opportunities. The first stage of these activities has commenced, and it includes the creation of new land parcels for redevelopment through the demolition of older, poorly designed public housing stock. As a result, there will be an increased supply of affordable housing stock for both purchase and rental, assisting the government to deliver on its commitment to provide improved housing opportunities for all South Australians. The next 12 months will continue to see activity in the north. An integrated human services plan for the project area will also be developed. Also under development is a comprehensive evaluation framework for the entire project over the full 15 years.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, you had a question about a series of areas where you believed there would be funding cuts. I cut to the member for Bright to give you time to find a reference. Do you wish to proceed with that?

Ms CHAPMAN: No. The minister does not want to answer, so that is fine.

The CHAIR: I have no idea whether the minister wants to answer that. I am not in telepathic communication.

Ms CHAPMAN: He wants to give an answer now, does he?

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, I have no idea. My job here is to uphold the standards of the parliament, not to protect the minister. Do you have a question that is in order?

Ms CHAPMAN: I do. It is on Budget Paper 3, page 2.28. The commentary states:

The budget includes a contribution to the SA Housing Trust in 2007-08 of \$6.8 million for homelessness initiatives—

It then goes on to refer to \$4 million for the Foyer Plus Partnership Project and \$2.8 million to facilitate the Port Augusta Regional Common Ground Project. That \$2.8 million is also referred to in the commentary on page 28, Budget Paper 6, to be spent in the 2007-08 year. Can the minister identify where it is included in Capital Investment Statement, Budget Paper 5, page 45 or 46—or at all?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: My information is that it was made as part of the budget process but out of the 2007-08 financial year, so it is not reflected in the 2008-09 budget papers. However, it was paid to the Housing Trust so it will be reflected in its accounts. Ultimately, the funding will be a project of a non-government organisation, so it will probably not appear in the government's forward capital works program, just as Common Ground has not. It would be a non-government project.

Ms CHAPMAN: So it is a grant to a non-government organisation?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you for that. In relation to this Common Ground project, in response to an earlier question I think you answered that, of the 39 apartments you mentioned today (38, incidentally, in the documents), there were still four vacancies. In regard to Port Augusta, will that Common Ground project also require disclosure of any history of alcohol, drug or other substance abuse and/or history of criminal record in the housing assessment form for applicants?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not think the details of how the Port Augusta Common Ground organisation operates have been finalised at this point. That is the simple answer.

Ms CHAPMAN: Just to clarify it then, minister, is it your understanding that a different set of guidelines or assessment processes will apply to Port Augusta?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, it is not my understanding that that would happen. However, I think those matters are yet to be resolved.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 46. The public housing redevelopment funding of \$168.977 million includes the explanatory note, 'The program is substantially supported by the sale of some of the resultant land allotments.' How much of this money is from the sale proceeds, what was the total amount of moneys received from the sale of property in the 2007-08 year, and how many dwellings have been sold, other than to the occupants?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will have to take that question on notice.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My question is on the issue of the Elizabeth Park Neighbourhood Renewal Project, and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.55. Will the minister advise the state government's funding commitment to the Elizabeth Park Neighbourhood Renewal Project, and how the project contributes to the redevelopment of public housing estates?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the honourable member for her question, and note her obvious interest in this particular development. In January 2008 an investment of \$16.57 million was approved that would deliver the Elizabeth Park Neighbourhood Renewal Project over the next four to five years. A further \$1.68 million was approved from the Urban Renewal Acceleration Fund for the purpose of strategic property acquisitions. This investment will result in major improvements to Elizabeth Park through the demolition of ageing public housing, with the resulting land subdivided and sold to provide over 220 new dwellings as well as the renovation of over 100 existing properties.

Project revenue will fund the construction of up to 80 new social housing dwellings, taking into account modern amenity, accessibility and energy efficiency standards. Small allotments will make more efficient use of land and will assist in making new housing more affordable. The majority of the house and land sales within the project will be targeted at low to moderate income earners through the Affordable Housing program property locator website. This project has the support of the City of Playford, which will complement the state's investment by providing \$1.5 million to improve and upgrade streets and open spaces. Elizabeth Park is the most recent of a long list of successful Housing SA urban renewal initiatives in this state, including Westwood at The Parks and Hawkesbury Park at Salisbury North, as well as the massive Playford North regeneration.

The CHAIR: Minister, I did not give you any opportunity to respond (had you wanted to) to the member's out of order question. I wanted to make the point that most members seem to find ways of making questions orderly but some do not. Are there any comments you want to make on that topic?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do, because we came back—

Ms CHAPMAN: I withdraw the question.

The CHAIR: I am asking it now.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have heard it now; I think it is the property of the committee. The customer participation model is a very important initiative for us—indeed, I have been confirmed in it by observing what occurs in the United Kingdom in this regard. We want to enhance customer participation rather than diminish it in any way. We are looking at new models to include a wider customer group, which basically reflects the housing reforms. We are now more than just a public housing authority; we have a whole range of clients and customers, people who move between tenures. It is not simply the case that we are just meeting the needs of people who are in public housing, but also community housing, people who have been in emergency housing, all the way through to affordable rental and affordable home ownership.

We want to use some of the existing structures, and there are some very good ones in different parts of South Australia—the Southern Round Table, the Playford North Community Reference Group—and we will certainly be advising regional advisory board members to participate in the new customer participation model. We are looking at the model of domiciliary care use for their customers. People should be confident that we are trying to enhance, not reduce, customer participation. In particular, we now have a ministerial advisory council in relation to housing, which seeks to represent the whole of the sector, not just one part of it.

Ms CHAPMAN: We will never silence them.

The CHAIR: Order! The time for examining the Minister for Housing has now expired. I now call the Minister for Families and Communities to the table.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S. Vardon, Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms B. Dunning, Executive Director, Families SA, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr J. Ullianich, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms S. Barr, Manager, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms J. Tilbrook, Acting Senior Coordinator, Strategy and Research Division, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr S. Ramsey, Deputy Executive Director, Families SA, Department for Families and Communities.

Mr G. Lamshed, Director Corporate Services, Families SA, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms L. Pugh, Director, Community Connect, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms L. Head, Director, Office for Problem Gambling, Department for Families and Communities.

Ms S. Carman, Executive Director, Office for Disability and Client Services, Department for Families and Communities.

The CHAIR: Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do. The budget for the Department for Families and Communities is framed around our continued response to the complex issues of child protection in our community. With the Keeping Them Safe Reforms we are implementing a multi-agency, multi-faceted, multi million dollar response to this critical issue. Within three weeks of coming into office in 2002, this government commissioned the Layton Review, the most far-reaching inquiry into child protection in this state's history. In response, we introduced Keeping Them Safe, an agenda which reformed the Child Protection Act to give us the legislative basis to underpin everything that we are now doing in government.

At the core of Keeping Them Safe is the notion that keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility, because we know that, when a child is abused or neglected, it is usually part of a continuum that can involve (in no particular order) drugs, alcohol, mental illness, disability, domestic violence, disadvantage, poverty, crime and intergenerational abuse. The reality

is that there are no quick solutions to this. Our reform is about working with families as early as possible to strengthen them. Where we can, we want to work with families to keep them intact. However, if children are in danger we will not hesitate to take them into care and, when we do, we owe those children the best care we can give them: extra support for them, extra support for foster families, and extra attention in education and health. This is what our reform is all about. It is critical reform, because Families SA is facing a dramatic increase in the reporting of child abuse and neglect.

This past financial year it received 31,000 notifications, and about 2,200 claims of abuse or neglect were substantiated. If we go back 10 years, there were half the notifications, but still about 2,000 substantiations of abuse or neglect. Recent research by the Department for Families and Communities has produced the staggering figure that almost one in four children who were born in 1991 have had contact with the child protection system. Even more disturbing is the fact that this trend appears to be accelerating. Already, of those born in 2003, more than 15 per cent have had a notification recorded, which is more than double the proportion who were born in 1991 when they were the same age.

Families SA cannot investigate all those cases. Our system would simply grind to a halt and it would not get to the really serious cases, but nor should we be investigating them all. The overwhelming majority of families involved in a notification need support, not investigation with a view to taking children away. The key plank of our reform has been to decouple notification from investigation and to challenge the view that all notified cases require an investigation. Unless we change this view; unless we leave Families SA to deal with the most acute cases, we will never be able to fully tackle the challenges of child abuse and neglect.

The serious events of last week show this reform in action. The children in one family group required a crisis response, and Families SA and other agencies acted immediately to find the children and get them into hospital and into care. The other family group required support which it had been receiving from Housing SA, DECS and health services, and it is now receiving additional support from Families SA, but the assessment made by the experts is that the family required support, not removal of the children. We need a system that allows child protection workers to make these distinctions. To implement the reforms we have had a more than 35 per cent increase in the number of state public sector workers working in our child protection system in South Australia.

In 2007-08, the state government invested further in the reforms across the child protection alternative care and youth justice systems. New family support programs for disadvantaged families with children have been established through new special family support grants. Pathways for intervention have been developed focusing on stabilising and supporting families where there are high levels of risk and adversity likely to lead to harm to children.

Increased financial support has been provided to foster, relative and kinship carers, and increased funded respite and support services have been provided, including the implementation of a carer identification card for foster carers. Standards for alternative care service provision in South Australia have been implemented, and an emergency care support team has been established to work intensively to find suitable long-term placements for children and young people who have been placed in interim emergency accommodation.

The rapid response initiative will be expanded to include health standards and priority access to dental and orthodontic treatment and centralised ambulance coverage. Dedicated support services for young people, who are leaving care, have been established as well as post-care services for adults who were in state care as children. We have worked with the Department of Education and Children's Services to appoint family service coordinators in children's centres whose role is to focus on vulnerable children and their families and to help them access the centres and receive support services.

Funded jointly with the commonwealth, there has been the development and implementation of a 'safe house' for women and children fleeing violence in Ceduna. Planning is underway for a safe house in Coober Pedy. Senior social workers have been placed in schools on the lands, and we have also made significant progress in reforming youth justice services with the Break the Cycle report.

Importantly, in April 2008 we received the long-awaited report and recommendations from Commissioner Mullighan on the Inquiry into Abuse of Children in State Care. On 17 June, the Premier tabled in this place the government's response to the 54 recommendations contained in the report. The government will be implementing 49 of them and giving further consideration to

four. Implementation of these recommendations will be a focus for the Department for Families and Communities over the coming months.

We have also received Commissioner Mullighan's report on Children in the APY Lands Commission of Inquiry. As an immediate response to this report, I have accepted the recommendations for an increase in the number of social workers in the lands and also the placement of two child protection workers specifically in the lands to investigate allegations of abuse.

Additionally, we have streamlined and simplified the grant processes for community organisations. We are providing community organisations with resources such as the DFC Connecting Communities website to assist it to deliver high-quality services that are manageable and accountable. We have realigned and refocused a number of community grants to redirect resources to vital priorities such as child protection and family support services. We have increased our partnership work with community organisations, particularly in the areas of workforce planning, regional services, support for families and community engagement.

A restructure of gambling services is also underway. Submissions have been called for proposals to operate gambling and financial counselling services in all regions of South Australia. These services will engage with problem gamblers and, when required, refer them on to specialist services. The gambling helpline is to be expanded to take on broader counselling follow-up and referral services on a statewide basis. Aboriginal gambling counselling services are being restructured in three service regions: metropolitan, Eyre and Western and Mallee services.

The 2008 budget enables the government to invest further in the reforms which have begun. The reforms will help the implementation of the Mullighan inquiry. The budget has allocated an extra \$190.6 million for South Australia's most vulnerable children and families. Since coming into government, with the implementation of the Keeping Them Safe reform agenda in 2004, the state government has put in place a range of programs, which run across health, child protection and other services, to protect our children. The 2008-09 budget builds on those earlier commitments and increases our ability to respond to children and families in need.

Ms CHAPMAN: I note that the government obtained the Layton report soon after coming to office, and I commend it for that initiative and review. Everything else since that time, however, I think needs to have clear consideration as to how effective or ineffective it has been. Clearly, the events of the last two weeks tell us that children are not being kept safe in this state. We have had a situation where one family with multiple children (family A) has been left in a neglectful and squalid situation when it has been known to the department for some two years. That is the first example. It ought to be a resounding indication to the government that it has clearly failed, when this family has been involved with the education system, the Housing Trust, and Families SA. There has been utter failure to protect that family.

The second family (family B), which also has a multiple number of children and which has come into this state and lived here for many months, is at a stage where those children were taken from the mother for medical help and, ultimately, taken into the care of the minister. That ought to remind this government that it has utterly failed these families. If a family has slipped under the radar and nobody knows about them, and they are living in a totally isolated regional community and have home schooling and no contact with any authorities, one can understand how they slip through the net. The level of government's failure to address this situation is utterly unacceptable. I thought I was on another planet when I heard the minister's statement.

My first question is: after the chief executive's statements last week, what has the minister provided in this year's budget for the chief executive's termination payment?

The CHAIR: The member is totally aware that the question is absolutely out of order.

Ms CHAPMAN: Page 10.4 shows the employee benefits entitlements.

The CHAIR: That does not make that question orderly; however, I do not want the member to go out of here with a big headline, so I will allow the minister to comment if he chooses, but he does not need to.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will answer in a similarly relevant fashion. Some people have chosen to look upon the recent events that have occurred in South Australia and tried to make political capital of them; they have tried to cash in on human suffering. There are others, though, who have just got off their backsides and tried to help. I refer to the member for Hartley and radio host Amanda Blair, who decided that the right approach was whether we could do something

constructive for this family that has been taken to hospital. They wanted to put aside the blame and finger-pointing and do something practical, so they made an appeal.

What has been demonstrated by that is the generosity of South Australians. It began as an appeal for donations, and we have seen that Adelaide is a very generous place. We have had the donation of pyjamas, clothes, toys and books for the children. We have seen an enormous outpouring of goodwill towards this family that recently arrived from Victoria. I also acknowledge Kerry and Craig Hawkins from Adelaide Dial A Bus in Dover Gardens. They have generously made their offices available as a collection point for the donated items, and have pledged to deliver the items to the children once they leave hospital and are settled, and any leftover items will be donated to other needy families in Adelaide.

So, that is the approach that some people in our community have taken. Others have chosen just to start pointing the finger and making the destructive comments that we have just heard.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to page 10.32. How many mandatory notifications of suspected child abuse have been received by Families SA in respect of each of family A and family B that I have referred to? When were they made, and were any made by the department of education in respect of either family?

The CHAIR: Again, minister, it is a bit hypothetical, but are you able to comment?

Ms CHAPMAN: It is not hypothetical. There are 22,000 referred to in the performance indicators at 10.32.

The CHAIR: That is right, but 'family A' and 'family B' are rather hypothetical.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Prior to 22 June 2008, the night that a number of children were taken into hospital, there was no notification regarding the family group that had recently arrived from Victoria. All the information I have seen indicates that we did not know that they had come here until the night they were taken into hospital. Having said that, this is a complex set of family relationships. But, consistent with those complex interrelationships, some of the children of the mother of seven children from Victoria may have spent some time with a locally-based family that was also the subject of media attention last week, the family of 12 children, at some time or times. What is clear is that one of the children from the Victorian family of seven has been living as part of the household of the locally-based family of 12 for some time. She is still living as part of that household. I repeat that prior to 22 June 2008 there was no notification regarding the mother and children who had recently arrived from Victoria.

As I stated throughout last week, Families SA records show that three notifications relate to the locally-based family of 12 prior to 22 June. One notification was made in June 2006 and relates to one of the children of the mother of 12. It related to some concerns of behaviour at school and was not regarded as raising any child protection concerns. A second notification was made in May 2007. This notification related to all members of the household of the mother of 12, which included the child from the Victorian family of seven who, as I referred to earlier, had been living as part of the household of the family of 12 for some time and was still living with that family. This notification related to the non-payment of rent and therefore possible eviction. The family worked with Housing SA and Families SA to address the non-payment. In addition, the records indicate that it was in the course of resolving this issue that Housing SA began to work with the family to find alternative accommodation more appropriate to the size of the household.

A third notification was made in October 2007. This notification was in relation to school attendance and concerns that the mother may be suffering depression. This notification also included the child from the Victorian family of seven to whom I referred earlier. The school attendance issues were followed up by DECS, with the result that the children were engaged at a new school. DECS worked extensively with the family and has reported that, until relatively recently, attendance was good. The health concerns of the mother were followed up. The family continued to work with Housing SA in regard to the new accommodation.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, were any of those notifications from DECS?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As I have just mentioned, there were two notifications from DECS. They were in June 2006 and October 2007.

Ms CHAPMAN: On 24 June, you claim to have said, in relation to these children, 'Given the physical state they are in, I think it would be difficult to imagine them being at school and teachers not being immediately aware of their circumstances and making the relevant notifications.'

You continued, 'I think we need to reflect about that. I think we need to reflect upon the fact that these children were in such poor health that nobody chose to draw that to the attention of the relevant authorities.' The two notifications you received from the school were nothing to do with the children's health; is that correct?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It was in relation to the family of six—

Ms CHAPMAN: So, only that family of six.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —who are in hospital at the moment.

Ms CHAPMAN: You say of those children that nobody in the department, notwithstanding your statements here that it would have been almost impossible not to have noticed how sick these children were, received any notification from anyone about this family for the six months they were living here.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, but we don't know how long they were living here.

Ms CHAPMAN: Isn't it correct that your understanding is that—

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Our understanding is what has just been reported, that is, it has been variously described as three months or four months.

Ms CHAPMAN: To your knowledge, had these children even been in school, those of that family who were of school age?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is highly unlikely that they could have been in school, given their physical state, and the advice is that they were not.

Ms CHAPMAN: Was the family living in Housing Trust accommodation provided by your department?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, not that we are aware of, although we are aware that the children, before they were taken to hospital, were found in a Housing Trust property, but they were not listed as tenants in that property.

Ms CHAPMAN: Was your department aware of them living in your property?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are you conducting an investigation into this? In fairness, if you have not looked at these issues yet, I am happy for you to take them on notice.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, we know the answer to that question, and I have repeatedly said this: we have had no notification of this family of six.

Ms CHAPMAN: How long, to your knowledge, were they living in your property?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We don't know that they were living in our property, and we don't think that they were living in our property.

Ms CHAPMAN: I'm sorry; my understanding is that they were not living in there but that, for a short time, they were living in a property—

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have no information about them living in a Housing SA property.

Ms CHAPMAN: And they weren't found in a Housing SA property?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: When the mother made a notification to the ambulance crew, and when the relevant investigations took place to try to find what they thought was the balance of the children, they were found at a Housing SA property in Elizabeth, I think, not in Parafield Gardens.

Ms CHAPMAN: So, it was a Housing SA property that you had not provided—

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, you have had nine questions.

Ms CHAPMAN: Can I have this one?

The CHAIR: And then will you ask orderly questions in future?

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you. Minister, after some of these children were found in your Housing SA property, have you conducted any investigation to find out how long they had been living in that property?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes. What we know is this: there has been no relevant communication with our authorities. We had no contact with these children prior to the evening of 22 June. That is the first that the state government authorities of any sort became aware of the family that has been described as the 'recently arrived' family from Victoria.

Ms CHAPMAN: Just so that I am clear about this, you do not know how long they were living in that house.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We do not know that they were living in the house at all.

The CHAIR: Deputy leader, the rules do apply to deputy leaders just as they apply to members. I am sure that the member for Bright has been eagerly awaiting a chance to ask a question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Can I just add that the police are currently investigating how long they were living in that property. Any investigation we undertake must give way to the current investigation that is occurring as a consequence of the charges. So, that property, and how long the six children were at that property, will be the subject of a police investigation. It would be quite improper for us to embark on a parallel process of investigation.

The CHAIR: The member for Bright.

Ms FOX: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does this mean that I now get 10 questions in a row?

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.33. Minister, can you outline the progress of the implementation of Breaking the Cycle and advise how it will improve the management and supervision of youth justice clients, including those involved in chronic offending?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In 2005 the government committed \$3.4 million over four years to develop and implement the pilot program Breaking the Cycle—an innovative, intensive case management program—with \$922,000 funding allocated to the Department for Families and Communities in 2007-08. Some \$946,000 has been allocated for 2008-09. DFC and the Department for Correctional Services—the service delivery partners—have established joint procedures and processes to bridge the gap and provide seamless services for young offenders on this program.

Intensive supervision is provided for 30—the current number is 27—repeat offenders aged 16 to 20 years. The intensive supervision focuses on reducing offending and improving life outcomes by assessing the offending risk behaviours and intensively targeting these factors through interventions with young people and their families.

As a result of a full assessment, the Breaking the Cycle case managers develop a comprehensive program for each young person which addresses their offending behaviour and focuses on the root causes that have led to that offending; for example, a lack of literacy, significant health issues or accommodation needs.

A case manager meets with the young person several times a week to monitor their progress and attendance, and specialist support services, such as health and education professionals, work closely with the young person to report back to the case manager.

The criteria for young people entering the program were altered—a decision by the cross-government executive management committee which comprises DFC and other agencies—to respond to the need for intensive supervision resources to be targeted to young offenders under SAPOL's Operation Mandrake.

Culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal young persons are provided, with the majority of those services being provided by the program's Aboriginal staff. The Aboriginal community has recognised that the service is culturally appropriate, and there has been positive feedback from the Aboriginal community.

The program is contributing to community safety by intensive work with these young people and their families. Strong networking and the use of services in other agencies is a key component of the program. Evaluation of the program is being conducted by the Attorney-General's Department, with a report due to be released in September 2008.

Both the outcomes and learnings from this program are being integrated into the implementation of the To Break the Cycle youth justice reforms. There is particular focus on risk assessment tools and processes that enable work with serious and persistent offenders to take place in a sustained manner.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.14. Will the minister outline the role of the Department for Families and Communities in the development of the government's children's centres initiative, and will he outline how this initiative will reduce the likelihood that children will come into contact with child protection services and youth services and reduce the need for alternative care placements for children?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The state government has committed \$23 million to opening at least 20 early childhood development centres across South Australia. The children's centres initiative already delivers a range of integrated early childhood services, providing preschool education, child care, sustained parenting, and family support and health information for children and their families.

These services are pivotal in providing improved care and enhanced learning opportunities for young children and assist with building positive family relationships and supportive social networks for parents. These are critical foundations in supporting families who are at risk of entering the statutory child protection system.

Many vulnerable families are reluctant to engage with government agencies for fear of having their children removed. By providing a range of early intervention services in a safe and welcoming environment, the children's centres play a crucial role in removing the stigma some families attach to using government services.

DFC and staff from DFC-funded agencies are currently involved in these centres in a number of ways, including:

- developing targeted programs and support services to support vulnerable families to develop meaningful relationships and provide appropriate care for their children;
- enhancing the connections of children who are the most vulnerable and helping to link them into government and non-government services that can best meet their developmental needs;
- increasing the focus on prevention, early intervention and the provision of supports to build family resilience;
- supporting parents and families to provide a physically nurturing and safe environment for their children;
- providing financial counselling and anti-poverty services to assist families to better manage their money;
- providing professional supports to workers in the centres to support them to work with vulnerable children and families;
- housing information and support to improve shelter outcomes for families; and
- the provision of disability support services.

In the future, more children's centres will have sessional or co-located DFC and DFC funded services. By intervening early and working with vulnerable families and children to address problems early, the children's centres initiative can have a major impact in preventing families from ever needing statutory child protective services.

Ms FOX: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.27. Can the minister please outline what funding has been allocated through Community Benefit SA for community service projects that benefit disadvantaged individuals, families and communities?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Community Benefit SA distributes money from gaming machine taxes over two funding rounds each year in February and August to non-government organisations for one-off community service projects that benefit disadvantaged individuals, families and communities. In the past 12 months, CBSA has funded 258 one-off projects for a total of \$3.5 million. Special needs target groups provided with assistance in 2007-08 included about 43 projects to benefit Aboriginal people; 77 projects to benefit disadvantaged families with children; 64 projects to benefit multicultural communities; and 73 projects to benefit people with disabilities.

Some of the projects address issues in more than one specialist needs target group, such as Aboriginal people with disabilities. In July 2007, I approved modifications to the CBSA funding guidelines given the high priority to funding projects that provide support to disadvantaged families with children. As a result, in 2007-08, a total of \$1.18 million was granted to 133 projects that support disadvantaged families with children, amounting to 30 per cent of funding compared with 23 per cent in 2006-07. Some of the specific programs included:

- employing a project officer to recruit and train volunteers and enable a number of Aboriginal organisations to provide support and run programs for Aboriginal families;
- conducting after school and school holiday programs in 2008 for over 150 Aboriginal children and young people aged four to 18 in Coober Pedy and Oodnadatta to provide families with respite;
- providing outreach and family support programs for refugee families living in the western suburbs; and
- recruiting volunteer carers to provide respite for parents on weekends and school holidays.

Further, new special family support grants were established to build family strength and resilience for vulnerable families in four disadvantaged regions in South Australia. Some \$2.1 million over 2008-2011 has been made available to NGOs providing intensive family support services for families identified as vulnerable, experiencing disadvantage or where issues of abuse and neglect may exist.

The NGOs that have been approved to receive annual special family support grant funding from February 2008 are: Uniting Care Wesley Port Pirie in Port Pirie, \$160,000 per annum; Anglican Community Care in Murray Bridge, \$170,000 per annum; Centacare in Noarlunga, \$160,000 per annum; Anglicare South Australia in Elizabeth, \$140,000 per annum; and Northern Area Community and Youth Services in Elizabeth, \$70,000 per annum.

The type of services offered to families can range from home visiting to practical in-home support, group work, counselling, advocacy and referral to other appropriate services. Culturally specific Aboriginal services are provided by Anglican Community Care in Murray Bridge and Anglicare in Elizabeth.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.29. On 2 July 2007 at last year's estimates I asked how many full-time equivalent employees a savings initiative of corporate overheads amounted to, and other specific questions on the same topic. According to my records, I still have not received an answer to that question, and I would appreciate it if I could have one. Looking at this year's savings initiatives, they include an item titled 'Savings target' of a total of \$10 million and 'Head office/administrative efficiencies' totalling \$7.63 million. How many full-time equivalent employees does this account for and, in relation to each, what expense, service or program do they relate to?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take those questions on notice. I thought that we had answered that previous question, but I will check that for you.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.29. Savings initiatives including antipoverty services/reduction in growth total \$1.703 million and special programs for youth—revised service delivery arrangements total \$2.367 million. What changes are being made to these services, and why are poverty and youth issues receiving a reduction in funding?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You need to look at these programs having regard to the substantial increase in funding that has occurred through the Breaking the Cycle initiative. I believe it is \$1 million over the forward estimates. The SPY program was established in 1996 as a joint DECS and Families SA initiative. Following meetings with senior officers in DECS, agreement has been reached on a change to arrangements for the young people who currently attend SPY on the delivery of future alternatives.

The new service model has been established in partnership with DECS and Maltorendi Aboriginal program. Families SA has also started to work closely with White Line, which is a non-profit organisation, to focus on new opportunities for young people at risk. The overall funding that is going into this area is increased. There has been some redistribution as between some existing programs.

Ms CHAPMAN: I will assume that the rest of those will come on notice and I will wait for them. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, pages 10.31 and 10.32. Last year on 2 July 2007 I

asked how much money was spent on motel accommodation for the alternative care of children in the 2006-07 year. I was provided with an answer on 6 May 2008 that '\$14.7 million was expended on motel, bed and breakfast, serviced apartment and like accommodation'.

How much was spent on the same accommodation services for the 2007-08 year and, if backpackers' facilities were not included, what was the amount for those facilities? Further, in view of the minister's indication of the expanded use of non-government service providers for 'home-based care providers, stabilisation of treatment centres and small congregate care settings', please advise the amount spent on those services.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take those questions on notice.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My question relates to the very important area of foster carer recruitment. I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.27 and Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.32. Can the minister advise what the government is doing to retain and recruit more foster and relative carers, given the significant growth in children needing alternative care?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a very substantial announcement that has emerged out of the budget. What we found from our research about foster parents is that the best possible way of recruiting additional foster parents is to have foster parents essentially support them in that role by talking to other people and encouraging them to be foster parents.

So, in this budget we acknowledge the incredible role that foster carers and relative carers play in our child protection system. Every night across South Australia hundreds of carers open their hearts and homes caring for the state's most vulnerable children yet, with increasing numbers of children coming into care, there is a growing need for carers. Between 2004 and March 2008, the number of children in alternative care has increased by 46 per cent, and it has been estimated that there will be 1,816 children in care by the end of June

Recognising the need for more carers, the state government has implemented a comprehensive strategy to retain and recruit foster and relative carers. In the first instance the strategy has focused on making the process of being a foster carer easier, improving levels of support that carers receive and by cutting through some of the needless bureaucracy associated with caring for children. We have worked long and hard to ensure that carers are considered part of the care team, and we have worked with carers to improve the information they are provided with to look after children.

In collaboration with non-government agencies, we also improved the quality of training and development opportunities for carers. As part of the 2008-09 budget, \$7.3 million has been allocated over four years to alternative care service providers to increase the ratio of case workers to foster carers, ensuring that foster carers receive more timely supports. We continue to increase the financial supports provided to carers to reduce the financial impact of caring for some of our most vulnerable children.

In terms of the recruitment process, during 2007-08 the state government has focused on increasing the number of general carers and carers for sibling groups. Marketing strategies were developed in partnership with the contracted non-government agencies and were delivered in metropolitan and regional areas. Further, market research was contracted which will inform future foster carer recruitment marketing campaigns. These campaigns have resulted in a significant increase in the number of inquiries and attendance at information sessions. For example, in April 2008, nearly 60 households attended various information sessions in metropolitan Adelaide, and it is expected that these efforts will result in additional registered carers in the coming months, adding to those already recruited during this year.

As at 31 May 2008, there were 883 registered carers looking after children across the state. I think that some of the recent publicity will also have provided an impetus for many people to come forward. Anecdotally, we are hearing that there has been a massive increase of calls coming through to our hotline from people offering themselves to be foster parents. The point I make today is that you can take two approaches to this very sad situation: one is to point the finger and the other is to do something about it. Some people have chosen to do something about it: some people have chosen to open up their home.

In recognition of the incredible role that foster parents play, we are also increasing financial support to foster parents. In this budget, we are increasing foster carer payments by a further 18 per cent. This will be on top of the 5 per cent we announced in July 2007 and on top of the 21 per cent delivered in January 2008. That means payments have risen by almost 50 per cent since July 2007. That means that, for a carer of a 16 year old, they will be receiving \$7,000 more

per year than before July 2007. That is a massive increase. Of course, caring for children is also a very expensive exercise, but it reflects the recognition of what we believe is an invaluable contribution by carers in opening up their hearts and homes to our most vulnerable children.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I must say that is excellent news, minister. The contrast with the previous Liberal government could not be starker. My question relates to the issue of community residential care facilities. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, pages 10.16 and 10.32. Will the minister please explain how the government is responding to the increased need for additional placements for children and young people with high and complex needs under his guardianship?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: During 2007-08, four additional placements were created within the existing community residential care units. This has increased the numbers in this service from 52 to 56, and \$13.6 million is being provided to establish two new residential care facilities—this is on top of the \$190 million that was announced in the budget. Families SA will own and operate two new establishments using a similar but improved model of care compared to those provided by the existing CRC facilities. Each CRC unit will have 12 children and young people, each with three or four bedroom modules that link internally so that residents can be both matched and separated, as appropriate. It will also enable sibling groups and specific needs groups to be accommodated, a significant improvement on current CRC models in operation.

In addition to the expansion of CRC facilities, we have developed service models and finalised service agreements in relation to individual packages of care which have been allocated to children and young people; and established partnerships with Disability SA and mental health in order to achieve better outcomes for common clients by case conferencing each common client in emergency care. The establishment of the additional two new residential care facilities meets part of recommendation 16 of the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, ensuring that no child or young person ever needs to be placed in emergency accommodation such as serviced apartments, bed and breakfast accommodation, hotels and motels.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I have a supplementary question. Will the minister tell us where these new units are going to be located?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We have tentative proposals, they have not been settled yet, but one of them appears to be in the north-western suburbs and the other in the southern suburbs. We have had some discussions with the relevant local members, in one case me, and in the other case—

The Hon. L. Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —that is right; it was complex—a member in the southern suburbs. We are yet to settle on the sites, but obviously the location of these sites is a matter of some sensitivity and so we do not want to disclose the precise location.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: My next question relates to the issue of the Dame Roma Mitchell Trust Fund for Children and Young People. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.27. Will the minister outline what grants are available to children and young people who are, or have been, under his guardianship to assist the child or young person achieve personal goals, contribute to their health and wellbeing and provide development opportunities?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The grants are available to children and young people who are, or have been, under my guardianship and who have lived in long-term family care, supported by DFC, through the Dame Roma Mitchell Trust Fund. The fund was established in 2003 by the state government and SACOSS, with \$1.7 million funding made available for distribution.

Grants are provided to assist the applicant to achieve personal goals, contribute to the health and wellbeing of the applicant and provide development opportunities for the applicant. Two funding rounds are held each year in January/February and August/September. An additional \$1 million of capital funds was allocated in 2006-07 to the Dame Roma Mitchell Trust Fund specifically for children and young people with a disability who are, or who have been, in state care.

In 2007-08, a total of \$253,888 was distributed, with \$206,000 to 97 children and young people. An additional \$47,888 was distributed to 30 children and young people with a disability in the first full year of operation of the new deed. Funding was distributed for a range of self-development opportunities, such as enrolment expenses to attend prevocational courses, assistance with setting up houses, and computers to assist with study and obtaining employment.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.10. Minister, last year your department had a \$38 million budget blow-out and you explained the pressures of increased costs

for children in alternate care and the pressures in the disability budget. This year, total expenditure is forecast to increase by \$42 million, and the explanatory note states:

This reflects additional expenditure to address increased demand for services within Families SA, an increase in tax equivalent regime payments and the impact of previous years' budget decisions.

What are each of these areas of increased demand and budget decisions, and how much extra funding has been applied? You will note, minister, that further down that page it refers to the savings being identified as reducing the government's bail-out expected at \$35.4 million, and it states:

This is partially offset by once-off funding received in 2007-08 for Tregenza Avenue Aged Care Services, the Supported Accommodation Demonstration project, insurance payment and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

I ask the minister, similarly, to identify the amount of savings of each of these funding receipts of sale, cancellation of program or otherwise.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The general answer, of course, is that we are doing more in terms of child protection. That is the massive additional effort that is going in, and has gone in, since we have come in to government; more than a doubling of our child protection budget since coming to office. I note that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been running around talking about real cuts in child protection. There has been over a doubling of the amount of resources put into child protection by this government, and that is independent of everything that we are doing with the children's centres through the department of education and through the maternal home visiting scheme in relation to health. The effort is enormous and, of course, the demand is also enormous, and growing.

This budget reflects the largest single increase in resources that have been put into child protection in the state's history. It is almost the second largest injection of resources since that which occurred in 2004-05 when we first responded to the Layton report. This has been an area of massive effort as we have rebuilt our child protection agencies, which, frankly, were on their knees when we came into government. That is the simple answer. That is where the money is going. The honourable member can call it a budget blow-out: I call it allocating money to our most vulnerable citizens, our children who are the subject of abuse and neglect.

Ms CHAPMAN: Just so that is clear, I will explain to the minister that I am not asking about this year's budget: I am asking about last year's budget. I will assume by that answer that, whilst the minister has again generalised as to the areas in which he says he has spent more funding, I have asked for specific areas and how much for each, because some of those have been identified in relation to tax equivalent regimes and the like. That is what I would be seeking.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take those specific matters on notice.

Ms CHAPMAN: Of the two community residential facilities to which the minister has referred in answer to a question from the member for Little Para to provide the 24 places for children in need, the \$7.476 million is for a project that is due for completion in January 2010 and \$5.63 million is proposed to be spent in 2008-09. Budget Paper 3 under 'an investing initiative for the forthcoming financial year' is identified as 'construction of community residential care facilities, \$2.888 million'. Then, in 2009-10, \$1.733 million is identified. Is the latter reference a new community residential facility or is it the ongoing project as a work in progress? Secondly, and on that same issue, consistent with the Mullighan recommendations for a secure care facility being provided for children, will one of these community residential care facilities be secure?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The answer to the honourable member's first question is that it is the latter: it is ongoing funding. The second answer is that the honourable member will see that the way in which we responded to the recommendation about secure care was that we have called for the guardian to provide a report on the models of secure care. These facilities will have the capacity to be made secure.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.27. I note the additional \$142.1 million over the next four years to support services to children in care. Pam Simmons, the Guardian for Children and Young People in South Australia, states:

The erosion of funding for intensive services for families in serious trouble stems back to the 1990s and by 2006-07 this state spent only \$4.81 per child compared to a national average of \$30.07. Our expenditure in this area has fallen 10 per cent since 2002-03, while the national trend is a rise of 81 per cent over the same period.

A 2006-07 report from Ms Simmons highlighted the substantial extra funding being invested by other states over the past two years. With this additional funding, what does the minister say the state's dollar per child spend will increase by as at 30 June 2009?

The CHAIR: Is the minister able to provide a response to those quotes which he does not have in front of him and which were unreferenced?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes. I want to make some general remarks about them, because I think it is important that we respond to that. This is a very small slice of what child protection agencies do. In South Australia the approach that is being taken is that this expenditure has occurred through health and education department expenditures. The children centres, where we are leading the nation, and the maternal home visiting (especially the sustained home service) is precisely expenditure in this area. That is not counted when one simply looks at what child protection agencies are doing.

We believe that that needs to be brought to account when assessing any per capita funding in relation to these matters. Part of the \$196 million in this budget has been specifically earmarked for that, and I will provide more details about that in a written answer. What also needs to be said is that we have re-orientated a range of our other programs about which we have already heard today. Our programs, in terms of community benefit and other programs in our 'community connect' area, have been redirected. Funding has been redirected in favour of providing intensive support for vulnerable families.

So, the effort has dramatically increased. We are coming off a low base—that is acknowledged. We have had to rebuild the child protection system which, as I said earlier, was on its knees when we came into government. Each year we continue to rebuild an element of the system, and this year a very substantial part of our approach has been the additional resources that are going into early intervention and family preservation.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 10.31. I refer to the Keeping Them Safe reforms, including family support and child safety. I refer back to the family that has been very public, minister. Your chief executive claimed in the media that the family with multiple children was a family coping with poverty. Has the minister identified what the household income was with three males and one female and how they were able to afford pets, including a pedigree dog alleged to have a purchase price of between \$600 and \$2,000 currently taken into care by RSPCA? On information obtained by the opposition, these pets have now been replaced in this household.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: A lot of misinformation has been spread around about this family. What I want to do here is say what I think most South Australians expect and that is that this family should be allowed get on with its life. They now have been moved to a location where hopefully they will be able to continue their life in peace and quiet. We have been working with that family to find proper accommodation for them, and that process will continue. I want to make a remark about the so-called removal of the animals, because somehow there is a suggestion that the housing was not fit for them. Our communications with the RSPCA confirmed that that was not the case and that none of the animals was removed because of poor health; indeed, they were all returned. They were only removed on the second occasion because of the fact that the family had to move in to alternative accommodation. I think that needs to be clarified on the public record.

Ms CHAPMAN: Minister, are you satisfied that they are a poor family? Has there been any investigation into that?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not understand the relevance that has to anything.

Ms BREUER: How do you define 'poor'?

Ms CHAPMAN: That is what I have asked: this question of poverty. That is the statement made.

The CHAIR: We do not have much time left.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not understand the nature of the question.

The CHAIR: Perhaps we could move on to an orderly question. I am not going to my right: I am allowing more orderly questions from my left.

Ms CHAPMAN: Has there been any inquiry, minister, as to the total household income of this family that would justify your chief executive making a public statement that the only thing wrong with this family is poverty and that they needed support?

The CHAIR: I do not think this is an appropriate question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I do not see the relevance of that to any of my responsibilities, either in relation to the budget or in relation to the family.

The CHAIR: Precisely.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: What we are focusing on is ensuring that this family is able to get back on their feet, and we are trying to be very focused on the children in that family, and publicly musing about the level of poverty the family is in I do not think will assist either of those objectives.

The CHAIR: Any further estimates questions?

Ms CHAPMAN: No.

The CHAIR: In that case, I declare consideration of the proposed payments in the Families and Communities portfolio consisting of Department for Families and Communities (\$794,327,000) and Administered Items for the Department for Families and Communities (\$139,551,000) completed.

At 17:00 the committee adjourned until Tuesday 1 July 2008 at 11:00.